■ Super / G2

Welcome to Cebu's paradise where celebrity sightings are common

■ World / A10

Wreck of Afghan passenger jet with 104 on board found

■ Property / B2-1

Pag-Ibig allots P22-B package to lenders, developers

■ Metro / A23

Rizal province displays top 40 poster (bad) boys

Tanong ng Bayan / A16

Year of the Rooster: Buenas para sa 'Pinas?

CELLCARD KADA ARAW,
CELLPHONE KADA LINGGO! Text 2910 now!

Smoking among young Filipinos down, says WHO

SMOKING among young Filipinos has fallen by about a third during a three-year period, the World Health Organization said yesterday.

The number of adolescents aged 13-15 smoking in the country dropped, the WHO said in a statement after a joint survey of 11,630 students and 7,478 students between

SMOKING/ A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY
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Saturday, February 5, 2005 ★★ 82 pages 12 sections Vol. 20 No. 59 P18
website: www.inq7.net

Sex, social activities cut risk of Alzheimer's

By Blanche S. Rivera

GOOD news for senior social butterflies and old people who are sexually active.

A study has shown that old people who frequently

SEX/ A20

OK DITO SA PILIPINAS KASI MALAKI ANG PAMILYA AT MARAMING APO!

Villar: Don't blackmail us

Senators hit oil firms for price hikes threat

By Michael Lim Ubac

WARNINGS from oil firms that pump prices and power rates will rise if tax exemptions of petroleum products are lifted are a form of blackmail the Senate cannot accept.

"We will die with our boots on," Sen. Joker Arroyo said, reacting to statements by some oil industry players that consumers would ultimately bear the burden of their inclusion in the value-added tax net.

The Independent Philippine Petroleum Companies Association warned that lifting the VAT exemptions would mean an 11-percent increase in the prices of petroleum products—and possible turmoil in the streets.

"I think this is a form of blackmail or a form of arm-twisting on the part of the oil companies," Senate finance committee chair Manuel Villar said.

He also noted that the oil and power sectors had previously said that a higher VAT would result in a hike in power rates by at least P.70 per kilowatt-hour.

"They cannot just turn around and threaten the public of price increases. It does not work that way all the time. The regulatory bodies can step in and stop this practice in order to protect the customers," Villar also said. *(See related story on A18.)*

Villar pushed for stricter regulations of the oil industry.

JOKER/ A22

MALACAÑANG PHOTO

ISLAND IN THE SUN
President Arroyo checks out the tourist potential of Quezon Island, the largest of the cluster of islets off Alaminos City, Pangasinan, which is now undergoing development to put back the "wow" as its mayor, Hernani Braganza, puts it in the once-favored but now largely ignored tourist destination.

RP in no hurry to rejoin US-led coalition

THE PHILIPPINES is in no hurry to rejoin the United States-led "coalition of the willing" in Iraq although it is still committed to fighting terrorism and supports the new government there.

During a visit to Sual, Pangasinan yesterday, President Macapagal-Arroyo said the government was still studying what the country's "proper contribution" would be in Iraq, noting that the main purpose of any country's foreign policy was its self-interest.

In his State of the Union address the other day, President George Bush said the US would "continue to build coalitions" to confront governments that promote terror and weapons of mass destruction.

Ms Arroyo, one of the first Asian leaders to support the US-led coalition in Iraq, stressed that she supports democratic processes in Iraq and would congratulate the winners of the weekend's elections.

Asked by reporters whether the Philippines would rejoin the coalition, she said the issue was under study.

She was sharply criticized by Washington and other US allies when she ordered the withdrawal of a token Philippine contingent from Iraq last year after Iraqi rebels abducted and threatened to behead a Filipino driver.

"Let me say we are committed to the fight against terrorism which means, No. 1, fight-

RP IN NO HURRY/ A22

Capability of 2 CAP investors questioned

By Christine O. Avendaño

SENATORS conducting an inquiry into the financial state of College Assurance Plan (CAP) are skeptical about the capability of the two new investors presented by CAP to infuse much-needed capital into the beleaguered preneed firm.

At the initial joint hearings conducted by the trade, banks and accounts committees, CAP officials assured the senators that the company was now paying P149 million in "dishonored" checks that served as payment for tuition fees of their plan holders.

Officials of the cash-strapped pre-need firm yesterday appealed to the Senate to give CAP two

CAPABILITY/ A4

US general says it's fun to shoot some people

WASHINGTON—A senior Marine general who commanded forces in Iraq and Afghanistan has been admonished by the commandant of the Marine Corps for saying publicly, "It's fun to shoot some people."

Lt. Gen. James N. Mattis, a slightly built infantry officer who is a revered figure among Marines for his fierce demeanor and warrior ethos, made the comments on Tuesday while speaking to a forum in San Diego about strategies for the war against terror.

According to an audio recording of Mattis' remarks obtained by The Associated Press, he said, "Actually, it's a lot of fun to fight. You know, it's a hell of a hoot. It's fun to shoot some people. I'll be

US GENERAL/ A20

Moody's says RP could get higher credit rating

INTERNATIONAL credit rater Moody's Investors Services has urged the Philippine government to improve the local business climate and stabilize the political landscape to get a higher credit rating.

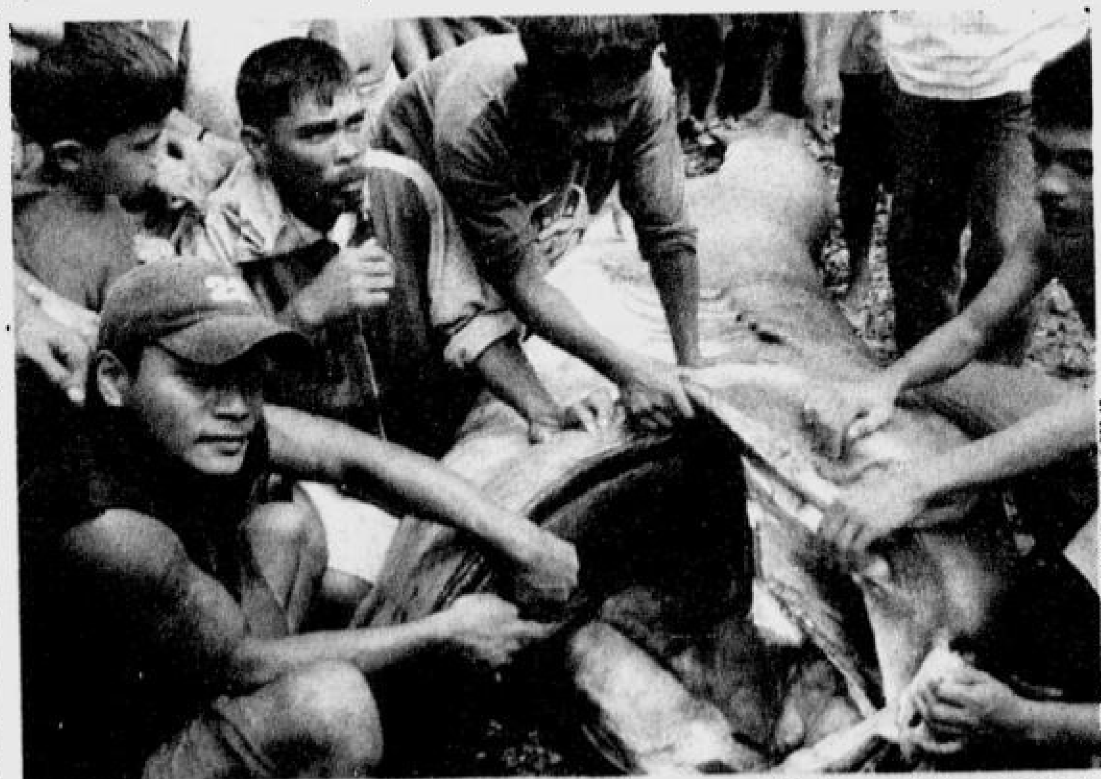
An "improved investment environment and a more predictable political environment" could lead to an upgrade in the country's credit rating, Moody's said in its global credit research released last month.

Moody's said the country's credit rating, currently two notches below investment grade, could also get a lift from the "sustained improvement in tax administration and with revenue enhancement, and privatization and restructuring of the power sector."

But Moody's warned that the Philippines could get a rating downgrade due to "a deterioration in political conditions adversely affecting investment and capital flows such as from legislative gridlock or the government's inability to maintain domestic security and failure to rein in the budget deficit and to complete the restructuring of the power sector."

In November last year, Moody's put the Philippines on review for a possible downgrade because of "heightened concerns that the government would not be able to put in place a robust package of fiscal measures that would reduce the budget deficit and contain debt

MOODY'S/ A22



BUREAU OF FISHERIES AND AQUATIC RESOURCES-10

VERY RARE FIND. A Megamouth Shark, which has a 3-ft grin, got entangled in the net of Sofronio Canares in the Macajalar Bay in Cagayan de Oro City, the 2nd time that a Megamouth Shark was found there. There have only been 11 such specimens caught, half of them unrecorded. The first was in Hawaii in 1976.

WHO'S MARTIN SORIANO?

The NBI agent who bragged of ties to FVR

By Fe Zamora

IN HIS HEYDAY in the 1990s, Martin Soriano was so "hated" at the National Bureau of Investigation that the corps of investigators planned to "ambush" him in the office premises.

But the flamboyant Soriano, who used a personalized car plate, NB EYE, outsmarted the bureau oldtimers by seeking protection from the elite Presidential Security Group, according to one of the agents who had plotted against him.

The source said Soriano had given the other agents the impression that he was close to then President Fidel Ramos because he was a supposed half-brother of a Ramos son-in-law, Lloyd Samartino, and was close to another son-in-law, Alex Sembrano.

But yet another Ramos son-in-law, Freddie Jalasco, said the former President's family was "never aware" that Samartino had a half-brother in Soriano, now 43.

"We know Lloyd as the only son of [chanteuse] Carmen Soriano, and I know that the [Ramos and Soriano] families have been friends for so long," Jalasco said.

Samartino is the product of Carmen Soriano's marriage to an Italian.

In the 1960s and '70s, the family reportedly lived in Magallanes Village in Makati City, where the Ramoses also lived.

Samartino married Jo, one of the Ramos daughters, when her father was President.

Jalasco also said he was not aware of the alleged closeness of Sembrano and Soriano.

Sembrano is married to Chula

THE NBI/ A20

7 cops being probed as accomplices

By Christian V. Esguerra

SEVEN police officers including a superintendent are under "discreet investigation" for supposed involvement in the criminal operations of Martin Soriano.

Director Avelino Razon Jr. yesterday said all seven officers were under his command, the National Capital Region Police Office. He refused to divulge their names and the ranks of the other officers pending completion of the investigation. He said the absence of a formal complaint against them was hampering a full-blown probe of their alleged links to Soriano, the previously elusive ex-agent of the National Bureau of Investigation.

In a radio interview early yesterday morning, Razon said part

7 COPS/ A20

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Mindanao and Southern Visayas will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: CHONA GALANG, PDI RESEARCH/02/05/05

Second FRONT PAGE

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Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Let's have a truce, gov't asks NDF

But Reds say they're losing interest in peace talks

THE MANY faces of President Arroyo as she listens to a foreign VIP who called on her at the Palace on Friday.

EDWIN BACASMAS

THE GOVERNMENT has formally asked the National Democratic Front, the political arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines, to agree to a ceasefire as a condition for resuming the protracted peace talks with the communist insurgents.

The proposal was presented to the Norwegian government, which is hosting the talks, by a top-level Cabinet delegation led by Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo, the presidential adviser on the peace process Teresita Quintos-Deles and the presidential chief of staff Norberto Gonzales.

Romulo had gone to Oslo last week in a bid to revive the long-stalled peace negotiations with the communists, which are being represented in the talks by the NDF.

Gonzales said it was not clear when the talks, which have been held up since August 2004, could resume.

In separate statements from their Netherlands exile, however, communist rebel leaders yesterday said they were losing interest in pursuing peace talks and accused the Arroyo administration of reneging on agreements.

"It is becoming increasingly clear that there is no point in negotiating with the [Philippine government], which does not know how to comply with agreements it has signed," said Luis Jalandoni, chief negotiator for the NDF.

Jalandoni said "rabid anticommunists" in the Arroyo administration "aim only for capitulation and pacification of the revolutionary movement" by insisting on a ceasefire ahead of a comprehensive peace settlement.

"They have no intention of continuing peace negotiations to address the root causes of the armed conflict and negotiate economic, social and political reforms," he said.

Gonzales said the government wanted a ceasefire for the entire duration of the peace negotiations, and not the two- or three-day ceasefires that have been observed in the past.

Citing the model of similar negotiations with the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front, Gonzales said there cannot be meaningful talks without a ceasefire.

President Macapagal-Arroyo mentioned the proposed ceasefire during a visit to Sual, Pangasinan, yesterday.

"We continue to ask for peace to keep the doors open for peace. In fact, we're proposing a ceasefire but it takes two to tango," Ms Arroyo said.

The President appeared to be pleased with the developments in the peace process in Mindanao.

"In the meantime our ceasefire with the MILF is holding very well and our prospects for the peace process for Mindanao are very, very good," Ms Arroyo said.

"Actually there's actual peace in Mindanao so writing the peace agreement is only making formal a reality and I would wish that the NPA [the communist New People's Army] could be as forthcoming," she said. *Juliet L. Javellana and AP*

NPAs threaten to attack foreign mining firms

THE COMMUNIST Party of the Philippines has threatened to disable the operations of foreign mining companies if they damage the environment during the development of projects the government hopes will revive the sector.

The CPP, whose military wing, the New People's Army, has waged a violent insurgency for 35 years, issued the warning Thursday as the government tried to woo investors at an international mining conference in Makati City.

Party spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal said in a statement that NPA rebels had been directed to mobilize the people in "defending the people's land rights and human rights against the destruction of the environment."

"The worst foreign mining companies who plunder and ravage the environment and our mineral resources, as well as their military and police protectors, will be punished," Rosal said.

According to Rosal, the NPA "can carry out a wide range of measures to disable the operations of the most destructive mining companies." In the past, the guerrillas have raided and destroyed the facilities of logging and mining companies that refused to pay "revolutionary war taxes."

The Philippines, estimated to have some $1 trillion in unexploited mineral wealth, is promoting the rejuvenation of the mining sector to boost the economy and cut its budget deficit and debt.

President Macapagal-Arroyo told a forum on sustainable mining at the presidential palace that the country needed foreign investors.

"We should never allow loud rhetoric to override patriotic sense," she said. *With reports from Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau, and Reuters*

Garcia did not declare 2 cars, say LTO men

By Alcuin Papa

TWO OFFICIALS of the Land Transportation Office testified yesterday before a military court on two vehicles supposedly owned by former Armed Forces comptroller Carlos Garcia but were not declared among his assets.

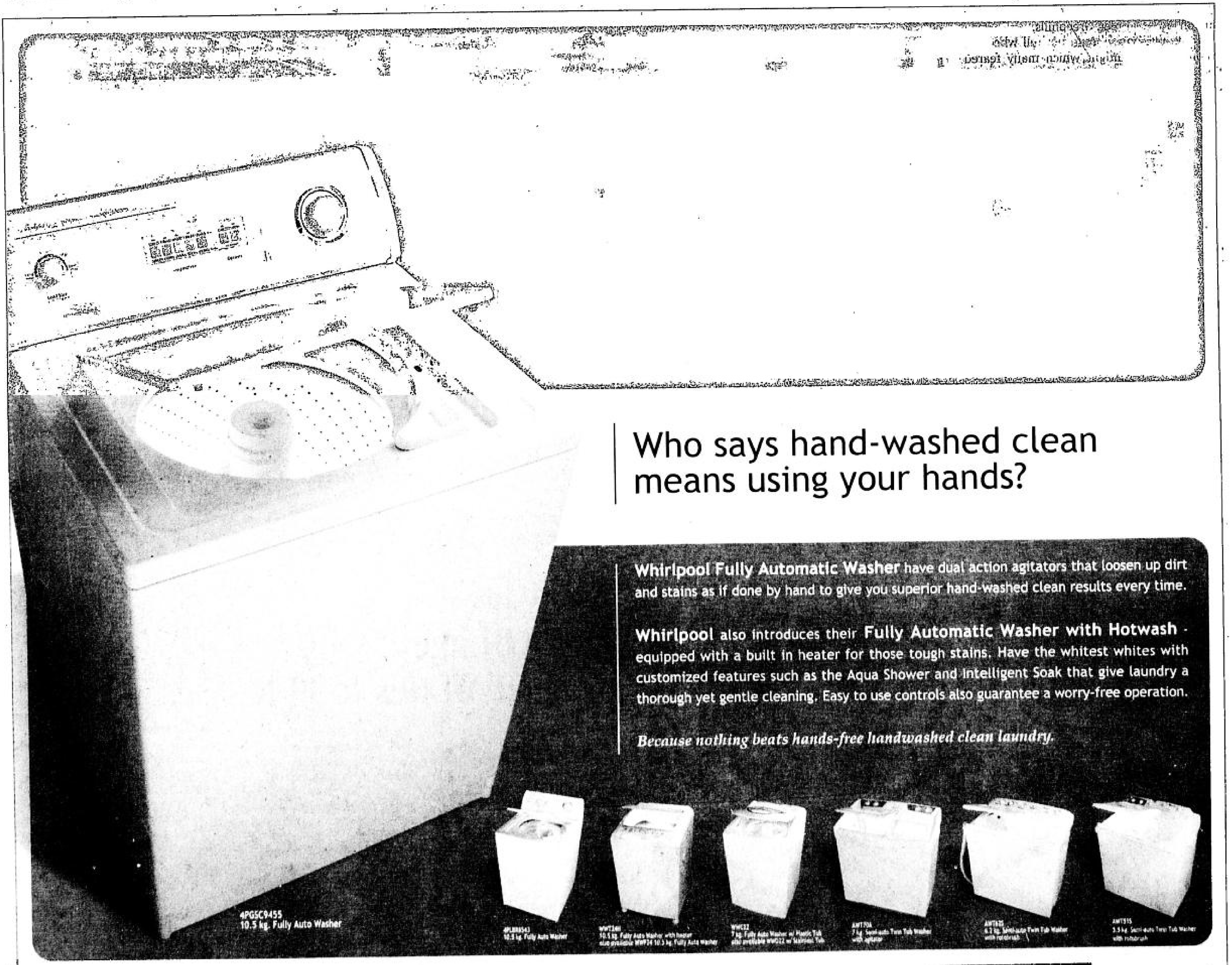
Honorio Quiambao and Ferdinand Magno presented certificates of registration and other documents that, the prosecution said, would prove that the retired major general owned the vehicles.

Quiambao, of the LTO district office in Diliman, Quezon City, was first to take the witness stand. He showed the court-martial a certificate showing that a Toyota Previa van with plate number UDS 195 was registered in Garcia's name in 1992, when he was still a colonel.

Magno, of the LTO district office on P. Tuazon Street in Quezon City, presented a certificate of registration indicating that Garcia also owned a Toyota Hi-Lux pickup with plate number WRY 843.

Lt. Col. Al Perreras said six LTO records officers would take the witness stand for each of the six cars Garcia did not include in his Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth for 2002 and 2003.

"The fact that he did not declare the six vehicles in the SALN is part of the charge sheet for his court-martial," Perreras told reporters.



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Controversial general gets E. Visayas command

By Alcuin Papa

A GENERAL accused by progressive groups of human rights violations has been given a command of troops in Eastern Visayas.

Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan was appointed commanding general of the Army's 8th Infantry Division covering the Samar and Leyte provinces. He replaced Maj. Gen. Glenn Rabonza who retired from active military service.

Human rights groups had accused Palparan of committing human rights violations in his campaign against communist insurgents in Mindoro a few years ago.

Armed Forces of the Philippines spokesperson Brig. Gen. Alexander Yano replaced Palparan as chief of staff, the Army's third highest ranking officer, and in charge of administrative matters.

Yano, former chief of the AFP-Civil Relations Service (CRS), formally took over yesterday.

Military information chief Lt. Col. Buenaventura Pascual said Yano would formally relinquish his CRS post to Air Force Brig. Gen. Jose Angel Honrado on Monday.

It was not clear who would replace Yano as AFP spokesperson and co-chair of the Joint Coordinating Committee on Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH) with the secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

KALIBO MASSACRE

Amok, no, psychotic, yes–PNP report

By Christian V. Esguerra

HE HAD a breakdown.

The cop who last month turned the Kalibo Ati-atihan festival into carnage was suffering from a mental problem when he shot and killed eight people and wounded 31 others.

PO1 Jonathan Moreño had an "acute psychotic breakdown," a mental condition that explained his murderous rampage, according to the final report of Philippine National Police psychiatrists.

Prior to the shooting, there were allegedly instances when Moreño thought he was being watched. The belief nurtured a feeling of "distrust, insecurity and fear," said Director Arturo Lomibao, Task Force Kalibo chief, citing the report.

Lomibao said the policeman also exhibited "aggressive behavior" on two incidents. This was another sign of mental disorder.

Lomibao denied reports that Moreño had punched his own father and fought with a soldier on separate occasions. He said these were just rumors.

Despite his breakdown, Moreño knew whom to kill, the official said.

"His action was not wanton, hence, he did not run amok," Lomibao said in a statement. "It was deliberate. He was still able to selectively and discriminately identify targets he wanted to neutralize."

The first one he shot and killed was his own boss, Senior Supt. Odelardo Magayanes, the Aklan provincial police director. Moreño was his close-in security.

"He held the belief that his superiors were corrupting him—but that was just his belief," Lomibao said. "What we're sure of is that he received persistent bribe offers from two fellow officers."

These officers were earlier identified as PO3 James Emmanuel Laguna and SPO3 Fidel Velasco.

Laguna has been found guilty and is undergoing summary dismissal proceedings. Velasco is still under investigation.

Lomibao said the "primary stressor" that triggered Moreño's rampage was the Jose "Boy" Cuadra case. The cop was a star witness, being part of the team that caught the suspected drug lord in Caticlan island in 2001.

Lomibao's task force found out that Moreño had been offered as much as P500,000 cash just to withdraw from the case. But the policeman consistently turned down the offers.

By holding steadfast to his convictions, Moreño had impressed his superiors. His murderous rampage, however, prompted the PNP leadership to check on the mental and physical soundness of its men.

A total of 18,717 uniformed and non-uniformed police personnel had undergone mandatory drug testing. Of this figure, 4,749 were policemen based in Camp Crame while 6,300 were from the regional offices.

Cop who probed Jaworski-Yap shootout named Metro's best

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE POLICE colonel heavily criticized for last year's bloody Jaworski-Yap shootout is this year's top officer in Metro Manila.

Senior Supt. Eric Velasquez will receive the award for "best senior police commissioned officer (PCO) for administration" during the 14th anniversary rites of the National Capital Region Police Office at Camp Bagong Diwa, Taguig on Monday.

Velasquez will be given the honor for his "outstanding performance" as Mandaluyong police chief, according to Director Avelino Razon Jr., NCRPO chief.

Just seven months ago, it had seemed unlikely for the official to get the award.

He was then embroiled in a controversy surrounding the shootout between Ryan Jaworski, 30-year-old son of former Sen. Robert Jaworski, and Anjelo Elton Yap, 14-year-old son of wealthy businessman Tony Yap.

Velasquez and his men came under fire for their allegedly sloppy investigation of the June 21 shooting at the back of Saisaki restaurant on Florida Street, Greenhills.

Until now, police could not tell who shot whom in the gunfight which many feared could have harmed motorists, bystanders and guests dining at the Japanese restaurant.

Jaworski suffered gunshot wounds on his legs and one eye was injured by shattered glass. Yap was reportedly traumatized by the experience. A number of parked vehicles was damaged by gunfire.

Many times during the investigation, Velasquez expressed dismay over the absence of any eyewitness.

Both the Jaworski and Yap camps showed very little cooperation, although both had threatened to sue each other in court. Soon, both parties became mysteriously silent and vague about the case.

Admitting that the evidence gathered might not stand in court, investigators filed criminal charges against the two camps. The cases were later dismissed by city prosecutors.

Again, Velasquez and his men were the target of criticisms. How could the police be helpless in a case involving the rich and the powerful?

All this is in the past, because on Monday, Velasquez will be walking away with the top NCRPO award.

Also set to receive honors are Supt. Benigno Durana Jr., the best senior PCO for operation; Chief Insp. Lino Banaag, best junior PCO; SPO1 Charlino Corpuz, best senior police non-commissioned officer (PNCO); and PO3 Hector de Veyra, best junior PNCO.

2 JI suspects killed in raid, AFP insists

By Alcuin Papa

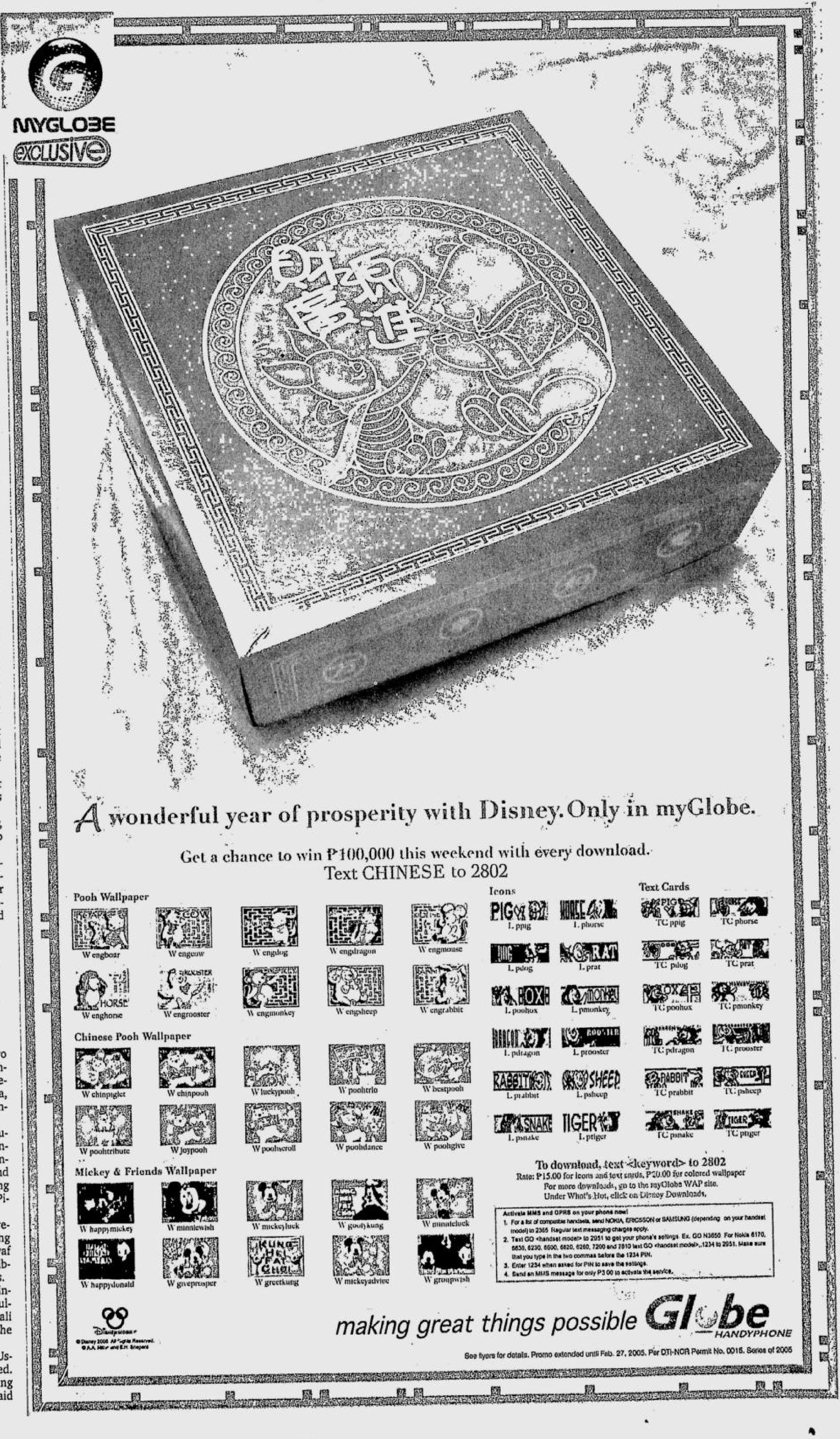
THE MILITARY yesterday insisted that two operatives of the Jemaah Islamiyah, an Indonesia-based regional terror network believed linked to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida, were killed in a military attack in Maguindanao last month.

Military spokesperson Lt. Col. Buenaventura Pascual said Army 604th Brigade commander Col. Gerry Jalandoni maintained that Indonesians Mohamad Ali Abdul Rahiman and Joko Pitono were among the 12 killed during the airstrike at the Butilan Marsh in Datu Piang town last Jan. 27.

The military launched the attack after receiving reports that a meeting was taking place between members of the Abu Sayyaf Group, a renegade group of Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels and JI members.

Rahiman, alias Muaya, is said to be a JI intelligence officer while Pitono, alias Dulmatin, was allegedly involved in the 2002 Bali bombings that killed over 200 people in the posh Indonesian island-resort.

A third Indonesian, identified only as Usman, managed to escape, Pascual revealed. "It has been a public knowledge in Datu Piang that the two Indonesians were killed," said Pascual, quoting Jalandoni.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Capability of 2 CAP investors questioned

From page A1

months to put its financial house in order.

They said CAP was addressing its capital-deficiency problems, citing that an impending capital infusion from Green Circle Properties and First American Investments (FAI) would provide the company with P6 billion and P15 billion, respectively.

Investors' capability

But the senators expressed serious doubt about the capability of the two investors that CAP is counting on to bail it out of its financial woes.

Little is known about FAI while Green Circle Properties and its owner, Romeo Roxas, have been charged in court for alleged illegal logging.

Sen. Mar Roxas, who chairs the trade and commerce, told reporters after the hearing that he had checked on FAI and did not find anything about the Nevada-based company in the Internet.

Zero capital

Roxas said CAP had submitted to the joint committees only one document, a Nevada Secretary of State certification saying that FAI exists but it had zero capital.

CAP president Enrique Sobrepeña said the Nevada-based First American Investments (FAI) was made up of "private bankers managing investment funds under trust accounts in excess of $3 billion.

MAN in the hot seat, Enrique Sobrepeña Jr., president/CEO of the College Assurance Plan answers probing questions during a joint hearings of the Senate committee on banks, financial institutions, currencies and trade and commerce. ROGER MARGALLO

'Doublespeak'

Senator Roxas said he also he found Sobrepeña engaging in "double speak" when he told the committees that CAP still has P8 billion in its trust fund to pay the claims of the plan holders.

"Just because you have P8 billion, it does not mean it's okay because you still have a P17 billion deficiency in your trust fund," he said.

Roxas also noted that in its company website and its statements to the media, CAP said the reason why the company got into trouble was because the SEC stopped it from selling plans.

"What further proof do you need [that] they are using cash [they get] today to pay past debts. So where will they get the money to pay for those who are buying plans today?" Roxas said in a mixture of English and Filipino.

Asked who the members of the board of the US firm were, the CAP president said that "as borrowers we are not privy to the ownership structure of our lender.

He added that CAP was talking to local representatives of FAI but did not know them personally since it was only last Wednesday that the SEC approved a memorandum of agreement between CAP and FAI.

Sobrepena said that for tax purposes, part of the funds of FAI were invested in "projects with social impact."

And because most of CAP's 780,000 plan holders were from the middle- and low-income classes, the US firm then "considered continued ability of CAP to pay its plan holders as in line with its objective of funding projects with social impact," Sobrepeña explained.

Fill up deficiency

Securities and Exchange Commission chair Fe Barin said that SEC had informed CAP that it had no objection to the loan contract agreement "but subject to the condition that the trust fund is not involved."

"We said in the letter that in short, lending and borrowing are between the borrower and lender and that [the] SEC would only come in if this would affect the trust fund," Barin said.

Barin said the SEC had no objection to the loan agreement but it wants to see the money because CAP needs to fill up the deficiency of its trust fund.

"The money (from FAI) is the best evidence that CAP's acute liquidity problem would be addressed," Barin said.

2nd investor

As for the second investor, Barin said the SEC was still examining CAP's application for approval of its property-for-share swap with Green Circle Properties involving 2,900 hectares of land for P6 billion worth of CAP shares. The parcels of land are located in Aurora province.

She said the SEC was appraising the value of the Green Circle properties.

'Hocus-pocus' equity infusion

Sen. Sergio Osmeña asked why the SEC would allow real property to be used as capital infusion when Section 62 of the Corporation Code provides that property may not be allowed as capital infusion except if it's necessary for the operations of the company.

He said that he could for instance give SEC a "song and dance" that he has this 10,000-hectare land in Tawi-Tawi and ask the commission to accept this to be put into Philamcare, another pre-need company.

"Why does SEC accept this kind of hocus-pocus equity infusion which tends to water down the stock or overvalue the stock," Osmeña asked.

'City of learning'

Barin explained that the SEC accepted the proposal because it was said that the ultimate plan was for the property to be converted into a "city of learning."

"It may sound remote but it will still be related to the business of CAP," Barin said.

Osmeña reminded Barin that CAP was in the business of preneed plans and not in real estate development.

"You could be taken to court on this particular thing. That's a song and dance again," Osmeña said.

He said the SEC was "endangering or allowing the [CAP] stock to be watered down."

SEC party to fraud

At one point, Osmeña said CAP could claim that its equity has been multiplied with "some voodoo transaction" and told Barin that she "could be a party to [the] foisting of fraud further on the plan holders of CAP and on future plan holders."

"I will seriously question that and I might even take SEC to court for that," Osmeña said.

Lawyer Romeo Roxas, owner of Green Circle Properties, attended the hearing and fielded some of the questions from the senators.

Romeo Roxas said he would not attempt to present a land title that was not valid.

He said he bought the property in 1995 and that he knew that the land had been paying taxes for the past 38 years.

He said he wanted to help CAP because it pioneered the preneed industry.

Environment Secretary Michael Defensor the other day filed suit against Romeo Roxas and Green Circle for allegedly engaging in illegal logging activities in Quezon and Aurora provinces.

Osmeña said two other preneed companies—Platinum Plans and Eternal Plans had actuarial reserve deficiencies as well.

Platinum Plans had a deficit of 46 percent out of its total trust fund while Eternal Plans had a 42-percent deficit, he said.

But Sen. Edgardo Angara told reporters that Miguel Vasquez, president of the Philippine Federation of Pre-need Companies, had told the committees that these companies were not technically deficient as they still have five years "to make up for this deficiency."

780,000 plan holders

During the hearing, the senators said they wanted to find out the "true financial picture" of CAP from officials of the firm and the SEC who had been invited to the hearing.

CAP, the country's largest education pre-need company, was reported in 2002 to have incurred a trust fund deficiency of P2.5 billion, putting into doubt its ability to meet future benefits owed to some 780,000 plan holders.

Under SEC rules, a pre-need company must set aside a portion of the premiums or payments collected from plan holders to build up the trust fund, considered a critical component of the mechanism designed to guarantee the capacity of the pre-need plan company to meet its future obligations to stakeholders.

The trust fund should equal the appropriate level that actuaries have determined for a certain year given certain economic assumptions, called the actuarial reserve liability (ARL).

Barin told the hearing that the SEC had seen the need to place CAP "under close monitoring" by three oversight boards since June 16, 2003.

She said oversight boards are created to oversee companies facing "some difficulties."

But Barin said the commission did not see any need to place CAP "under close monitoring."

Capital impairment

She said the CAP has a capital impairment of P5.4 billion and a trust fund deficiency of P17 billion. The firm currently has P8.5 billion in its trust fund holdings when it should have P25 billion in actuarial reserve liability (ARL), she said.

But Emilio Aquino of the SEC's first oversight board cited the report of external auditors that CAP's capital impairment has increased and that it now stood at P20.1 billion.

Upon questioning by Sen. Alfredo Lim, SEC officials said that as of Nov. 25, 2004, CAP was facing "dishonored checks," —checks that the CAP issued to its plan holders which bounced—amounting to P149 million.

Sobrepeña said that only four percent of the P149 million, or P48 millon, "remains unattended" at present.

"But we have P8.7 billion in trust fund which we are liquidating .... There are enough funds to pay whatever is the account available at the time it is needed," Sobrepeña said.

"It's not that we are not able to pay. It's just a matter of time to liquidate the assets," Soprepeña said.

Money must be in

Lim underscored the need for this money to be "definitely" in CAP's hands because there was a danger that plan holders would just be lulled into believing that the $300-million capital infusion was there to help CAP pay off their claims.

Sobrepeña then took the opportunity to explain what CAP was doing.

"We are trying to find a way by which we can liquefy in a quicker way the amount we need from year to year and this is one of the systems we have discovered," he said.

"Give us a chance to finish the transaction. It's almost there. We will know after the period of two months whether it goes through or not," Sobrepeña said.

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Smoking among . . .

From page A1

the years 2000 and 2003.

Among adolescent boys, the percentage who smoked declined from 32.6 percent of the total in 2000 to 21.8 percent in 2003, the WHO said.

Among adolescent girls, a similar decline of 12.9 percent to 8.8 percent was noted in the same period.

Global youth survey

The Philippines is one of 133 countries included in the Global Youth Tobacco Survey, initiated by the WHO and the Atlanta Center for Disease Control and Prevention in the United States.

The GYTS, which collected data from 1.4 million students worldwide aged 13-15, was developed to monitor youth tobacco use, attitudes and exposure to tobacco smoke, the WHO said.

Other findings noted that students were more likely now to support smoking bans in public places than in the past. In 2000, about 39 percent of students polled in the Philippines supported a ban while in 2003 that number increased to nearly 89 percent.

Jean-Marc Olive, the WHO representative in the Philippines, urged the government to evaluate its current tobacco control programs and "enhance or expand them to reduce adolescent smoking further."

Boys and girls

Among adolescent boys, the percentage of current smokers declined by one-third, from 32.6 percent in 2000 to 21.8 percent in 2003. Similarly, among adolescent girls, current smokers declined from 12.9 percent to 8.8 percent in the same period, the survey showed.

According to the WHO, tobacco use is one of the major preventable causes of premature death and disease in the world and a disproportionate share of the global tobacco burden falls on developing countries where an estimated 84 percent of the world's 1.3 billion current smokers live.

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Japan assures RP legit entertainers welcome

FOREIGN Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo is greeted by his Japanese counterpart Nobutaka Machimura prior to their meeting at a Tokyo hotel Thursday. Romulo is on a three-day visit to Japan. AFP

TOKYO—Japan has promised the Philippines it will not target Filipino workers here for legitimate reasons amid a tightening of immigration rules to fight human trafficking, a Japanese diplomat said yesterday.

Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo at a dinner Thursday with his counterpart Nobutaka Machimura asked that Japan keep its doors open to Filipina entertainers, who send home vital remittances.

"In response, Minister Machimura said those who truly have proper skills and are recognized by proper authorities and organizations should not have problems coming to and working in Japan," the diplomat said.

"Those who are already in Japan should also have no problems if they have legal permits to work here," he said.

Romulo told Machimura that his government was willing to work with Tokyo to curb human trafficking, the diplomat said.

Starting next month, Japan is planning to restrict entertainment visas to people with two years' training outside Japan or at foreign educational institutes.

The move came after Japan was put on a US watchlist for slavery due to the large number of foreign women who come to Japan and end up working in its vast and mostly tolerated sex industry.

On Thursday, Japanese police said they also aimed to require businesses to prove that foreign employees had work permits. They hope to ban fliers sent to homes advertising the sex trade, which is illegal but widely available in Japan.

Nearly 300,000 Filipinos work in Japan, many in bars and other nightspots. They are part of the Philippines' vast overseas labor force whose billions of dollars remitted each year are equivalent to 11 percent of the country's domestic economic output.

Separately, the two foreign ministers agreed to make progress toward a free-trade agreement, the diplomat said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo and Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi agreed on basic points of a trade pact in November on the sidelines of a regional summit in Laos. *AFP*

New policy won't affect visa holders

By Philip C. Tubeza

FILIPINO entertainers who already have visas to work in Japan would not be affected once the new Japanese immigration policy tightening the entry of foreign workers takes effect in March, Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo said in a statement yesterday.

Romulo said that Japanese Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura assured him during a two-hour working dinner in Tokyo on Thursday that once the amendment to Japan's Immigration Act takes effect in March 2005, there will be no retroactivity in its application.

This means overseas performing artists (OPAs) who already have their working visas could still go to Japan.

Filipino sentenced to death in Brunei for killing girlfriend

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN—A Filipino with a history of psychiatric problems has been sentenced to death in Brunei for murdering his Filipina girlfriend.

Brunei's High Court convicted Ibrahim bin Abdullah Puzone, 50, a Muslim convert formerly known as Edgar Puzone, and sentenced him on Thursday to hang for the death of Vilma Taalal Misal in May 2003.

The court heard Puzone stabbed Misal, a 25-year-old waitress, in the chest with a knife while she was working at a restaurant in Bandar Seri Begawan.

Puzone then tried to kill himself repeatedly with a knife, ice pick and paper cutter, but workers at the restaurant prevented him from fatally wounding himself.

Puzone's lawyers told the court he was on medication to treat a long history of psychiatric problems, and medical experts were flown in from Manila to testify that he was not aware of his actions when he murdered Misal.

But judge Dato Paduka Steven Chong said Puzone's mental illness was not a strong enough mitigating factor for him to escape the death penalty.

Puzone had been living in Brunei for 10 years and worked as a graphic designer.

A Philippine Embassy official said Puzone would appeal his sentence to the Appeals Court, which is made up of a panel of three High Court judges. *AFP*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, February 5, 2005
4th Week in Ordinary Time
1st Reading: Heb 13:15-17,20-21
Gospel: Mark 6:30-34

The apostles returned and reported to Jesus all they had done and taught. Then he said to them, "Go off by yourselves to a remote place and have some rest." For there were so many people coming and going that the apostles had no time even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a secluded area by themselves.

But people saw them leaving and many could guess where they were going. So, from all the towns they hurried there on foot, arriving ahead of them.

As Jesus went ashore he saw a large crowd, and he had compassion on them for they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began a long teaching session with them.

Commentary

The death of John distraught the crowds of people who had looked to him in hope and they surge around Jesus and the disciples. Jesus sends the disciples off together in a boat to rest but the people see them leaving and know where they're going and follow on foot. They are desperate, afraid and bereft without John's words. Jesus sees them and has compassion on them—they are like sheep without a shepherd. And he turns into the core of his life, accepting responsibility for all of them, herding them together, preaching them and teaching them, giving them life and hope in him. This is his way of life, the disciples' way of life and we too are called to be those who hold the people together, preach Good News and daily, life-long teach hope, a way to live in the face of murder, power run amok, injustice and violence. Let us pray that we shoulder our burden of the gospel and learn the compassion of a shepherd for so many without a sense of life's meaning and goodness.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

JUDICIAL ETHICS—Gross ignorance of the law—The respondent judge displayed gross ignorance of the law in failing to observe the requirement of a finding of probable cause before ordering the arrest of the accused in a criminal case. Section 8, Rule 140 of the Revised Rules of Court, as amended, classifies administrative charges as serious, less serious, or light. Gross ignorance of the law or procedure and gross misconduct constituting violation of the Code of Judicial Conduct are classified as serious charges. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Callejo, Sr., Second Division, Español vs Mupas, A.M No. MTJ-01-1348] BY R. B. VERA

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Thousand Mile Wish	Finger 11	1kMileWish
Breathe No More	Evanescence	BreatheNoMore
Save Me	Alter Bridge	SaveMe
Megalomaniac	Incubus	Megalomaniac
Ragdoll	Maroon 5	Ragdoll
Change The World	P.O.D.	ChangeDWorld

SONG TITLE	ARTIST	KEYWORD
Here In My Room	Incubus	HereInMyRum
Everybody's Changing	Keane	Everybody
Boulevard Of Broken Dreams	Greenday	Boulevard
Breaking The Habit	Linkin Park	BreakinDHabit
Harder To Breathe	Maroon 5	Hard2Breathe
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Senators train guns on gov't jet-setters

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE DAYS of jet-setters in government may be numbered.

Senators yesterday agreed to slash the perks enjoyed by government officials—including their controversial intelligence funds and overseas travels—so that there would be money for more urgent needs.

Sen. Manuel Villar, chair of the Senate finance committee and sponsor of the P907.6-billion proposed national budget, said government could no longer maintain the jet-setting lifestyle of its high officials.

"We are really dealing with a bare budget this year. There is nothing much to cut. And whatever we would be able to cut, we would realign for other uses," Villar said. "We would cut intelligence funds, travel expenses, representation expenses and training expenses. These are the only areas we can cut on."

Villar said cutting expenses on these four items—the cuts would reach P800 million—would also send a message to everyone in the government that belt-tightening was needed in austere times.

"It will serve as a reminder to government officials and employees that we are still in the midst of a crisis. We need to save as much as we can," said Villar, who expects budget floor deliberations to end next week.

Villar said that whatever would be cut from official travel and representation expenses would be channeled to projects like the schoolchildren-feeding program of the Department of Education. *(See related story on Page A1.)*

Close scrutiny

Since Monday, the Senate has been holding morning and afternoon sessions to dissect the proposed budget.

Floor deliberations lasted up to 1 a.m. yesterday due to lengthy interpellation by Sen. Richard Gordon on the budget of the National Economic Development Authority.

The day before, Gordon spent more than three hours defending—and attacking—the budget of the tourism department.

Senate President Franklin Drilon said he expected the chamber to finish the debate and vote on the measure by Tuesday.

VAT rate increase expected to push peso to 50:$1 mark

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

PURISIMA: Look at overall impact on economy

AN INCREASE in the value-added tax rate will bolster the peso and move it closer to the 50-to-the-dollar level desired by President Macapagal-Arroyo last year.

"The passage of the VAT bill will further strengthen the peso as it will enhance both consumers' and investors' confidence on the government's ability to solve its fiscal problems," incoming Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima said.

Purisima noted that the peso had breached the 54-to-the-dollar level mainly because of the reforms Ms Arroyo initiated, such as keeping the budget below deficit targets, lobbying for new tax bills, raising power rates, and privatizing the National Power Corp.

If Congress passes the Malacañang-endorsed plan to raise the VAT rate from 10 percent to 12 percent, Purisima said this would virtually address investor concerns about the fiscal crisis, prompt more foreign investments into the country, and further drive up the peso value.

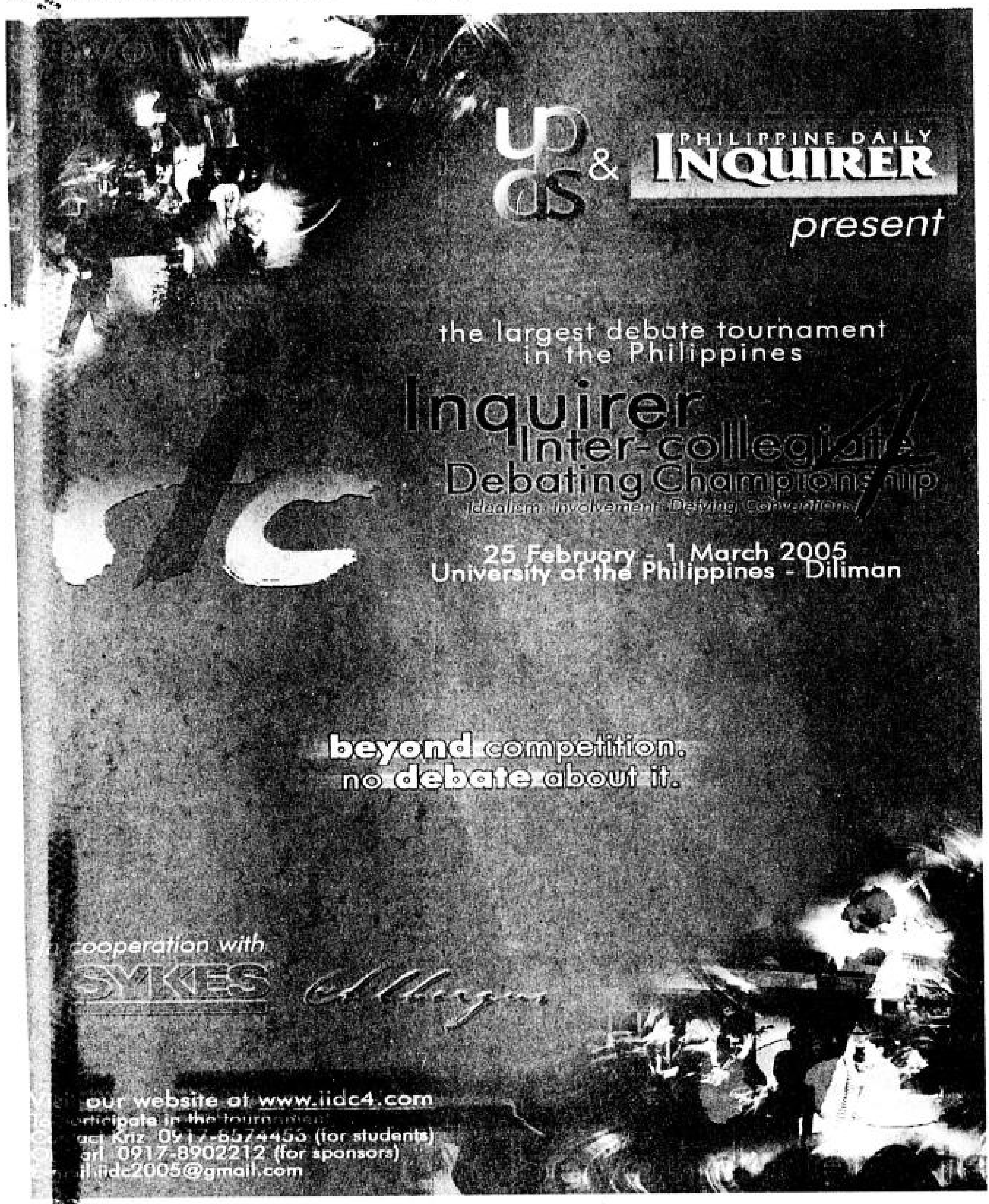
Realistic target

He said the VAT debate should not be focused solely on its price impact but also its overall impact on the economy.

Ms Arroyo told a major business organization last year that the peso should be valued at 50 to the dollar.

Analysts said the President's target was realistic considering that the peso had lagged behind other currencies in the region that have recovered between 12 percent and 25 percent since hitting bottom during the 1997 financial crisis.

A 10 percent gain would push the peso toward the 50-to-the-dollar mark.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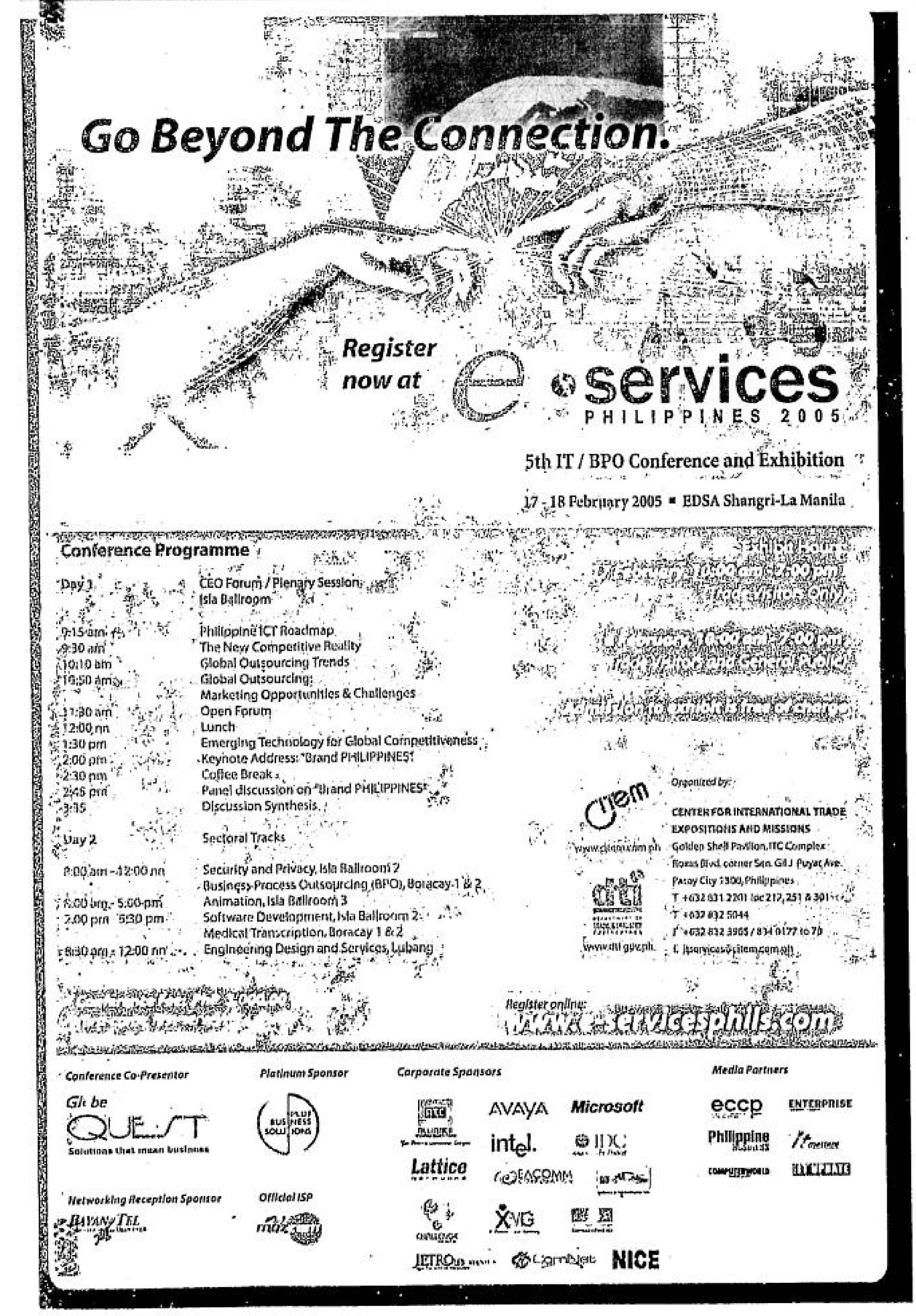
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9:30 am	The New Competitive Reality
10:10 am	Global Outsourcing Trends
10:50 am	Global Outsourcing: Marketing Opportunities & Challenges
11:30 am	Open Forum
12:00 nn	Lunch
1:30 pm	Emerging Technology for Global Competitiveness
2:00 pm	Keynote Address: "Brand PHILIPPINES"
2:30 pm	Coffee Break
2:45 pm	Panel discussion on "Brand PHILIPPINES"
3:15	Discussion Synthesis
Day 2	Sectoral Tracks
8:00 am - 12:00 nn	Security and Privacy, Isla Ballroom 2
	Business Process Outsourcing (BPO), Boracay 1 & 2
1:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Animation, Isla Ballroom 3
2:00 pm - 5:30 pm	Software Development, Isla Ballroom 2
	Medical Transcription, Boracay 1 & 2
8:30 pm - 12:00 nn	Engineering Design and Services, Lubang

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MALAYSIAN CRACKDOWN

Portalets, '10,000 hats' ready for Filipino 'boat people'–DSWD

By Volt C. Contreras

THERE will be portalets and up to "10,000 hats" ready for the new arrivals.

Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman yesterday said her agency has prepared a "more organized" reception down South for undocumented Filipino migrants pouring out Malaysia, to avoid a repeat of the pitiful "boat people" scenes that marked a similar homecoming in 2002.

In a press conference, the Secretary said Kuala Lumpur's decision on Monday to suspend its crackdown on illegal aliens particularly in Sabah gave DSWD enough window to set up processing centers, food, and transportation services in Zamboanga City.

Because of the suspension, the DSWD expects the arrivals to be in relatively smaller batches—and not in the swarming, chaotic scale that turned up during the 2002 deportation, she said.

"There will be no large mass of people held up in one place. The numbers will be smaller now and we're more prepared because we now have a social welfare attaché who had been meeting with Malaysian officials early on," Soliman told reporters.

Also, she said, DSWD's preparations managed to consider details such as the provision of up to "10,000 hats" for would-be deportees, to make their six-hour trip home from Sabah more bearable in case they get shipped on Navy vessels that offer no shade in the sun.

Social welfare desks also serving as immigration processing centers are on standby in Zamboanga City to help returnees who wish to put their papers in order should they intend to return to Malaysia immediately, she said.

She said the centers will be capable of processing documents in 24 to 48 hours.

Food and pocket money for transportation will be provided to those who wish to return to their hometowns, she explained, adding that the department has initially allotted P5 million for these services.

An estimated 162,000 undocumented Filipino workers have yet to avail themselves of the immigration amnesty offered by the Malaysian government, she said.

Pray for Tarongoy, bishops urge all Catholic churches

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE CATHOLIC Bishops Conference of the Philippines yesterday urged all dioceses to say a prayer for Filipino hostage Roberto Tarongoy, who remains in the hands of Muslim extremists almost three months after being kidnapped in Baghdad, Iraq.

In a circular released yesterday, CBCP president Davao Archbishop Fernando Capalla called for the recitation of a prayer composed by the CBCP's Commission on Liturgy immediately after the Holy Communion in Masses and during public oratories.

"We should exert more effort. We know that there are pressing concerns affecting the country, issues internal to our country, but there is a Filipino still being held hostage... Let us remember him and let us once more put him in the forefront of the priorities of the government to release him because he is a Filipino," CBCP secretary general Msgr. Hernando Coronel told reporters.

"We pray for his condition. Hopefully through prayers and revival of all diplomatic efforts, we will be able to secure his release," Coronel said.

The family of Tarongoy, who belongs to the Parish of St. Jude in Davao City, wrote the CBCP to appeal for help in bringing back Tarongoy's plight to the attention of the government.

Tarongoy, a 31-year-old accountant, left the Philippines for Qatar in June last year. A month later, he crossed to Baghdad to work for Saudi Arabia Trading Company.

"We pray for Roberto Tarongoy as he languishes in torturous uncertainty, held hostage by extremists, a pawn in the deadly game of war. We pray for his safety, that his captors treat him with respect and dignity," the CBCP's prayer goes.

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Tandang Sora, Q.C.
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Alfredo M. Sacote
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Sta. Mesa Heights, Q.C.
P10,000 2nd Prizes
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East Rembo, Makati City
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Efren Malabanan
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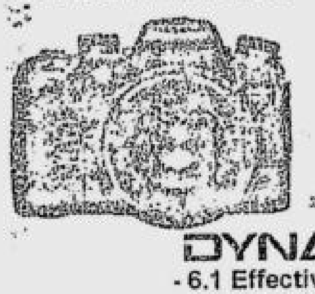

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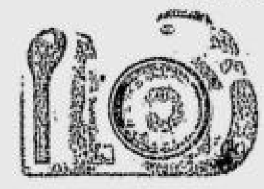

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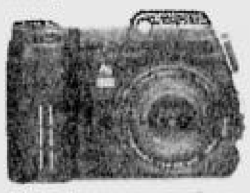

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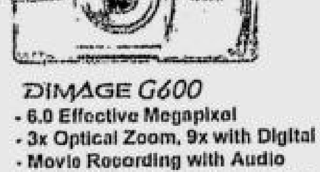

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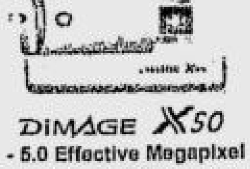

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We need Cha-cha, NPC solon tells Palace

By Carlito Pablo

THE RECENT economic gains cannot be maximized or even sustained without structural changes through constitutional amendments.

This was the pointed warning that Tarlac Rep. Gilberto Teodoro Jr. yesterday directed at Malacañang, in reaction to its lukewarm reception to the House's efforts to revive the issue of Charter change with the aim of effecting a shift to a parliamentary and federal form of government.

Teodoro recalled that amending the 1987 Constitution was a major campaign promise of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"The whole nation heard the President well [in 2004] when she made the promise to push for Charter amendments. She anchored her candidacy on the need to pursue structural reforms. Where is that promise now?" he told reporters.

Teodoro is a key member of the Nationalist People's Coalition founded by his uncle, businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco. The NPC is a major ally of the ruling Lakas-CMD.

Ms Arroyo's recently revived party, the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino, had warned of a split in the Lakas-Kampi coalition in the House should the ruling party insist on pushing Charter change.

But Teodoro said the matter was "an issue worth risking the coalition for."

He conceded, however, that the Liberal Party chaired by Senate President Franklin Drilon might be reluctant to support Charter change because its members had supposedly set their sights on taking Malacañang in the 2010 presidential election.

The LP is said to be pinning its hopes on Sen. Manuel "Mar" Roxas III, who topped the last senatorial election and is touted to be its standard-bearer-in-the-making.

Commenting on Drilon's strong opposition to Charter change, Teodoro said: "We have no choice but to continue trying to convince him."

Teodoro said the current presidential system with a bicameral legislative system had proved incapable to meet the demand for swift reforms.

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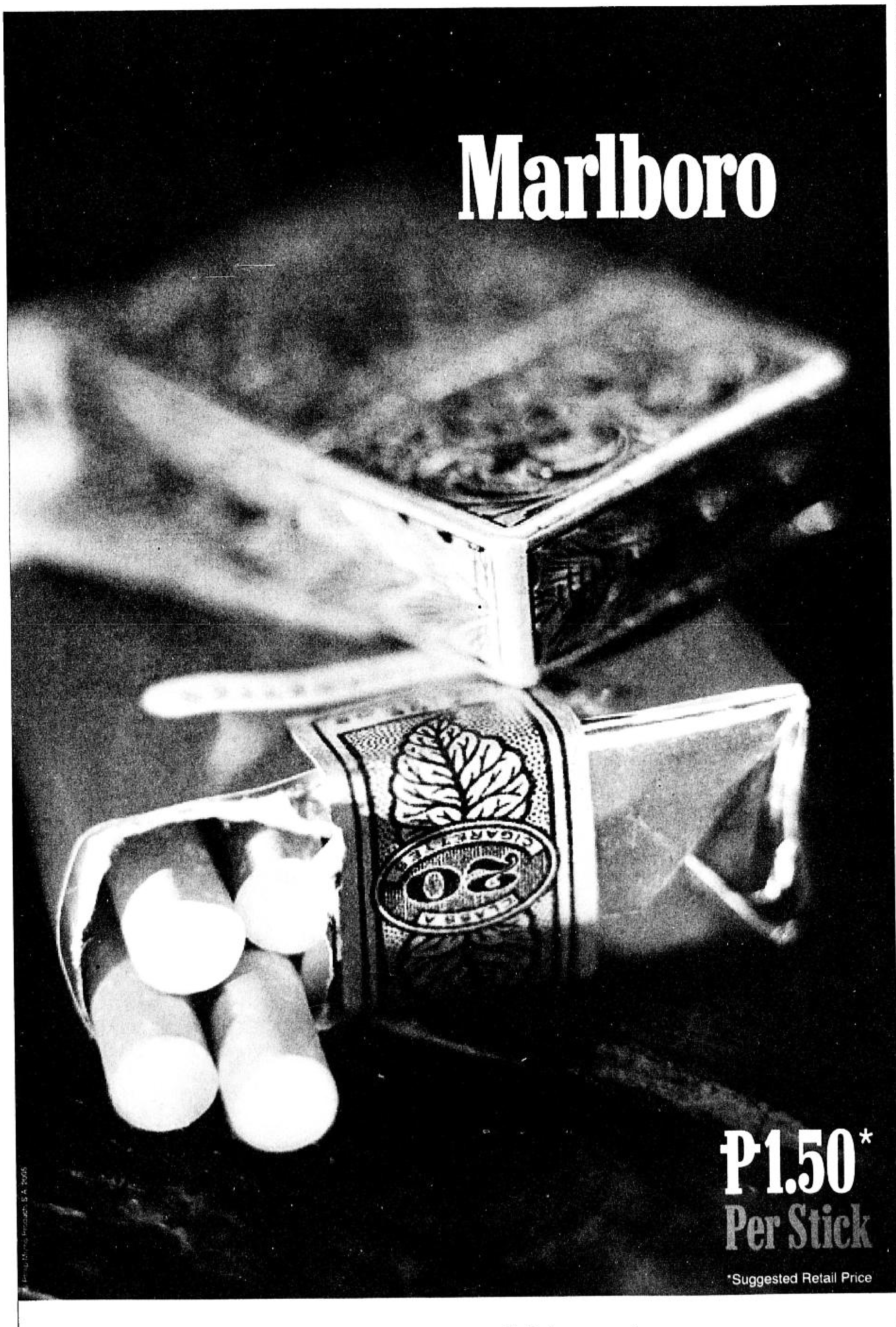

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Wreck of missing Afghan plane found

ISTANBUL—Turkish officials said on Friday the Afghan Transportation Ministry confirmed a missing airliner carrying 104 people on board had crashed.

It was not known if there were any survivors.

"The Afghan Transportation Ministry officially announced that the plane crashed," the Turkish Prime Minister's office said in a statement that included the names of nine Turkish nationals who were on board the Kam Air Boeing 737.

Western security sources in Afghanistan said wreckage from the plane, which was headed from Herat to Kabul on Thursday, was found northeast of the capital on Friday. The plane had been turned away because of heavy snow.

"The plane was found 35 kilometers east of Kabul. We don't know if there are any survivors," a Western security official told Agence France-Presse on condition of anonymity.

Another source close to the search mission said the plane had been located but put the distance from the capital at 57 km.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization peacekeeping troops and Afghan forces carried out a huge hunt for the plane, which vanished shortly after asking permission to divert to northwestern Pakistan because of the poor weather.

Afghan Transport Minister Enayatullah Qasimi refused to comment, while officials from the privately-run airline could not be reached.

Out of radar screens

Earlier, Qasimie said the plane dropped off radar screens "about 3.1 miles east of Kabul" shortly after speaking to air traffic controllers.

Nine Turks, three Americans and other foreign nationals were thought to be among the 96 passengers while six Russian and two Afghan crew members were also on board the plane, officials said.

The three American women working for the US-based Management Science for Health company were probably on the plane, operations manager Bill Shiffbauer said. Other officials said they were aged between 20 and 30.

"We are fairly certain that three of our staff are in the plane, three American women. We're hoping for a miracle, but it appears that they were in (the plane)," he said.

It was not clear who had discovered the wreckage of the plane but the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (Isaf) had coordinated the rescue mission, conducting ground and helicopter searches of the area.

Contact lost

Afghan forces, including 10 helicopters, were also involved in the operation, defense ministry spokeperson Gen. Mohammad Zaher Azimi said.

Airline officials said the last contact with the plane was around 3:15 p.m. on Thursday when it asked Kabul for permission to land at the northwestern Pakistani border town of Peshawar because of the snow.

The airline had frantically checked with all other nearby airports to see if the 737 had managed to land somewhere else.

Qasimi had said that a low-visibility landing system had been operational at the airport for a month and a half.

"As far as I know the landing was possible—whether to land or not land is decided by the pilots," he said.

Isaf said the plane had contacted the US-led coalition airbase at Bagram, near Kabul, shortly before it crashed.

Last contact

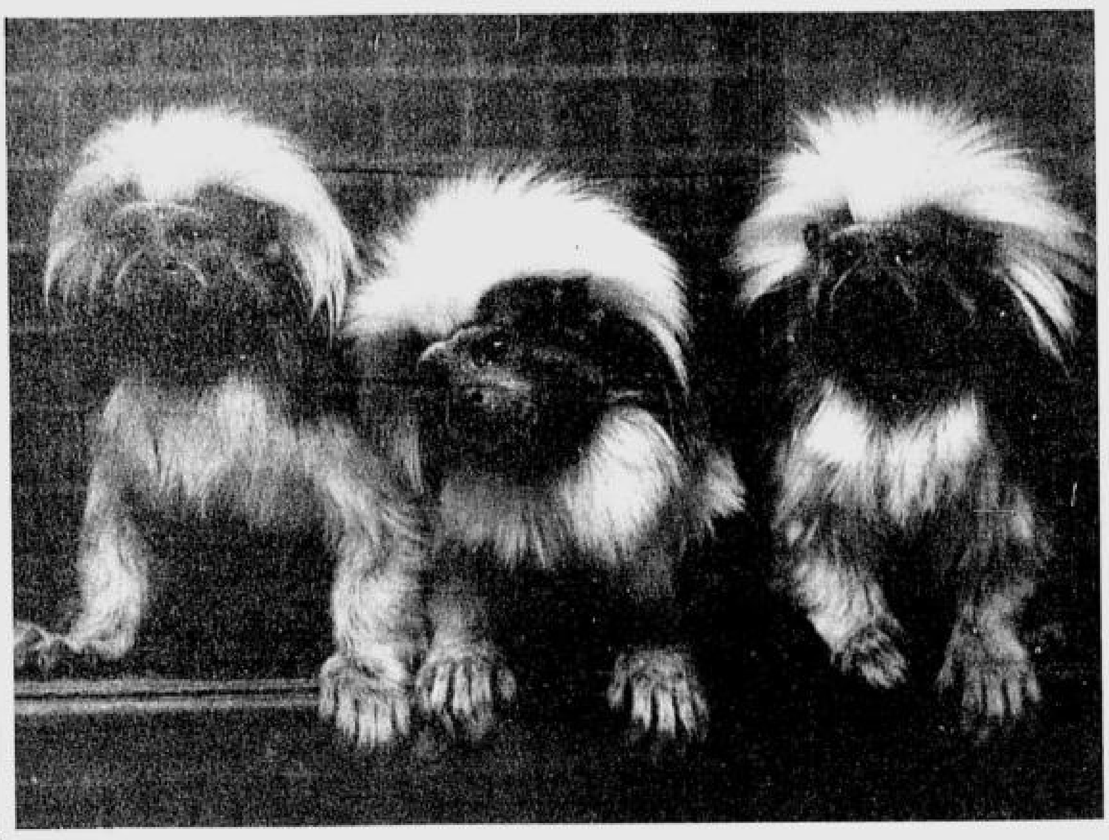
"Bagram instructed them to talk to Kabul airport because they were expected to land there and that was at 3:18 p.m. Thursday. Then they went missing," spokesperson Ken MacKillop said.

A Pakistani interior ministry official said the jet never contacted Peshawar airport, while Pakistan's Civil Aviation Authority said it had no record of a Kam Air flight landing in any Pakistani city Thursday night.

Planes bound for Kabul are regularly diverted to Peshawar during the winter months, where blizzards reduce visibility and make landing hazardous in the mountainous region. Kabul airport is also closed to civilian aircraft at night.

Kam Air is the first privately-run Afghan airline and was launched in November 2003 with a fleet comprising a Boeing 767, a Boeing 727, an Antonov 24 and the Boeing 737 missing since Thursday, Kamgar said.

The airline connects several towns in Afghanistan and also has international flights to Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. *Reuters, AFP*



THEY'RE NOT DOGS
Cotton-Top Tamarin monkeys, from left: Rio, Baby and Pinkie are pictured back home at Drayton Manor Theme Park and Zoo in Tamworth, England, Thursday after being stolen earlier in the week. The trio was recovered during police raids in the Erdington district of Birmingham, England, and are being assessed by keepers. AP

Bush's 'misguided' call angers Iran

TEHRAN—US President George W. Bush's attack on Iran as the world's primary sponsor of terror and his call for freedom for its people has further enflamed tensions between Tehran and its arch-enemies in Washington.

Bush's State of the Union address was the latest US broadside in an increasingly bellicose war of words over Iran's nuclear program, which Washington claims is a cover for efforts to build an atomic bomb.

The US president, who three years ago said Iran was part of an "axis of evil" alongside Saddam Hussein's Iraq and North Korea, has already hinted at possible military action to forestall Tehran's nuclear activities.

In his address on Wednesday, Bush charged that Iran "remains the world's primary state sponsor of terror—pursuing nuclear weapons while depriving its people of the freedom they seek and deserve."

"To the Iranian people, I say tonight: As you stand for your own liberty, America stands with you," he said.

Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei responded by saying Bush was the fifth US president since Jimmy Carter in the late 1970s who "wants to destroy the Islamic republic, but he will fail" as the others did.

"The United States is one of the heads of the dragon of world oppression... the brains of which are the Zionist and non-Zionist companies and capitalists who elected Bush to guarantee their interests," he said on state television.

"Today the Iranian people and the Islamic republic are the target of aggression by the oppressors in the world... who are using all means to try to stop the Iranian people from progressing and to destroy them."

For his part, foreign ministry spokesperson Hamid Reza Asefi rejected Bush's call as misguided and ignorant of the Islamic republic's history.

"Mr. Bush has forgotten that the great Iranian people, through the Islamic revolution 26 years ago, put an end to the dominant influence and presence of the United States in Iran," he was quoted as saying by state news agency IRNA.

Asefi said the US president was "closing his eyes to the realities of the Islamic republic with its deep-rooted freedom and democracy."

Washington—decried in Iran as the Great Satan—cut diplomatic relations with Tehran shortly after the 1979 Islamic revolution.

The two powers have engaged in increasingly barbed exchanges, and Iranian leaders have urged the population to turn out in force for mass anti-US demonstrations on Feb. 10 to mark the 26th anniversary of the revolution.

Washington has raised the threat of military action although the European Union, including top US ally Britain, is negotiating with Iranian officials over the nuclear program.

Last month, Bush said he could not rule out using force if Tehran failed to rein in its nuclear plans. US Vice President Dick Cheney said Iran was "right at the top of the list" of global trouble spots. *AFP*

UN stunned by Iraq oil program scandal

UNITED NATIONS—A damning investigation said the head of the UN oil-for-food program in Iraq obtained allocations of oil and unusual payments in a scandal which has badly tainted the image of the United Nations.

The results of the probe emerged as the count from Sunday's election in Iraq gave the main Shiite alliance a commanding lead but insurgents fought back with a spate of attacks that killed almost 30 people.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan immediately ordered disciplinary action against the official, Benon Sevan, who has denied wrongdoing.

Annan was "shocked" by the revelations in the investigation, said his chief of staff Mark Malloch-Brown.

The report by an independent panel, headed by former US Federal Reserve chief Paul Volcker, stopped short of saying Sevan, a Cypriot, had taken bribes.

It said, however, that Sevan had repeatedly asked for allocations of oil from the regime of Saddam Hussein on behalf of a small trading company registered in Panama that then re-sold the oil.

The regime was hoping to buy influence through Sevan, Volcker said.

"In making such solicitations, Mr. Sevan created a grave and continuing conflict of interest. His conduct was ethically improper and seriously undermined the integrity of the United Nations," the panel said.

It said Sevan had denied asking for the allocations for African Middle East Petroleum, run by a relative of Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Annan's predecessor as secretary general of the United Nations.

From 1996 to 2003, the $64-billion program was intended to help Iraqis cope with international sanctions imposed over Saddam's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. Under UN supervision, Baghdad was allowed to sell oil and use the revenue to buy humanitarian supplies like food and medicine. *AFP*

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Shiite-backed candidates lead in initial Iraq poll results

BAGHDAD—Iraqi officials Thursday released the first figures from weekend national elections, showing a commanding lead by candidates backed by the Shiite Muslim clergy. Rebels unleashed a wave of attacks, killing about 30 people, including two US Marines and a dozen Iraqi army recruits.

Meanwhile, election officials said strict security measures credited with preventing major rebel attacks may have inadvertently deprived many Iraqis in the Mosul area and surrounding Ninevah province of their right to vote.

Partial returns released by the election commission four days after the balloting showed the United Iraqi Alliance, backed by Iranian-born Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, leading with 1.1 million votes.

The ticket headed by interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, a US-backed secular Shiite, trailed second with more than 360,500 votes.

Only 1.6 million votes have been counted and certified from 10 percent of the country's 5,200 polling centers, the commission said, and the numbers were too small to indicate a nationwide trend. The partial returns came from Baghdad and southern five provinces with heavily Shiite populations.

Shiites make up an estimated 60 percent of Iraq's 26 million people and the al-Sistani-backed ticket had been expected to roll up such huge margins in the Shiite heartland that the other 110 candidate lists would have to struggle for votes in the rest of the country.

Although Shiites turned out in huge numbers in cities such as Basra, Nasiriyah, Karbala and Najaf, many Sunni Arabs apparently stayed home, either out of fear of insurgent attacks or in response to boycott calls.

Shiite clerics told their followers that voting was a religious duty, while Sunni preachers urged a boycott of any balloting as long as American and other foreign troops remained in the country.

Election officials have said it could take up to seven to 10 days from the Sunday vote to produce full official results and determine turnout. Seats in the National Assembly will be determined based on the percentage won by the various tickets.

The count appeared to have been delayed somewhat by controversies in the Mosul area, where many people complained that polling stations had run out of ballots or never opened due to insurgent threats.

On Thursday, the electoral commission said it had sent a team to Mosul to investigate the complaints. It was unclear how many voters were affected.

Election official Safwat Rashid said that authorities decided on election day that they could open more polling stations than expected because security was better than forecast. *AP*

53 dead as Indian train collides with tractor

NEW DELHI—Fifty-three people were killed in central India Thursday when a train collided with a tractor pulling a trailer that was crammed with people returning from a wedding, police said.

"Fifty-three people have died. We fear the death toll could go up," said a police official from near the site of the accident at Kanan village, 688 km east of Bombay in Maharashtra state.

About 20 were injured and many of them were in a critical condition, said the official, who did not want to be identified.

The tractor's trailer was carrying more than 70 people who had attended a marriage ceremony. They were hit by the train at an unmanned level crossing, the official said.

The dead were 30 women, 18 children, including a 3-year-old boy, and five men.

"The people traveling in the train coaches are largely unhurt," said Indian Railways spokesperson Santosh Kumar.

The injured were taken to hospital in Kanan.

Senior railway officials and police brass rushed to the site as workers cleared the tracks.

Serious railways accidents occur regularly in India, where the railways transport more than 13 million passengers daily on networks that sprawl 108,700 km across a nation with a population of over one billion.

The system records around 300 accidents every year.

In December a head-on train collision in the northern state of Punjab caused by a signaling fault killed 38 people and injured 52. *AFP*

MERMAID SYNDROME
Peruvian Dr. Luis Rubio carries Milagros Cerron in this May 2004 photo. A team of doctors will attempt to free her legs from each other on Feb. 24. AP

Pope's poor health raises questions: What happens if...

VATICAN CITY—Pope John Paul II's deteriorating health has churchmen wondering what might happen if he can no longer carry out his papal duties—and medical experts say they are uncertain whether that could result from his current medical condition.

Church observers say there could be a major crisis should he become incapacitated because some powers, such as appointing bishops and issuing major documents, are reserved for the Pope. Popes can resign, but John Paul has shown no such inclination to do so and the last to step down was Celestine V—in 1294.

The frail Pontiff, who has Parkinson's disease, has for some time been cutting back on his activities, leaving speeches to be read in his name and having trusted aides sit in for him at some Masses and represent him at events abroad. That has allowed him to concentrate on major documents and appearances such as Christmas.

Still, before he came down with the flu on Sunday, he had not missed a scheduled audience in 16 months and had scheduled a trip to Germany in August.

The Vatican has insisted there is no cause for alarm, and John Paul's spokesperson, Joaquin Navarro-Valls, suggested the Pope would be released from the hospital in a few days.

Doctors say the scarce information emerging from the Gemelli Polyclinic hospital where the Pope is being treated points to a wide range of possibilities: the Pope could return to the state of health he had before hospitalization, or face a sudden or gradual decline that leaves him bedridden and unable to communicate.

The length of John Paul's hospital stay may be an important indicator of how successfully he will recover, said Dr. Duncan Forsyth, a geriatrician specializing in Parkinson's disease. A long stay could signal a graver illness and a higher possibility that he might not return to his previous state, said Forsyth and other experts.

Forsyth, who practices at Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge, England, said it was difficult to tell whether John Paul had a simple viral infection that caused his windpipe to swell and the voice box to tighten or whether the problem involved a chest infection, which is more serious.

"They seem to have been quite specific in the information they have given out. It's all (voice box). Once they start saying he's got a chest infection, that implies a greater degree of seriousness."

Chest infections are common in Parkinson's disease patients because they often have difficulty swallowing. Food or saliva may go down the wrong way, to the lungs instead of the stomach—a process called aspiration. That can set off inflammation in the airway and infection. Aspiration pneumonia is a common cause of death among Parkinson's disease patients.

Church experts, such as the American Jesuit the Rev. Thomas Reese, have argued that the church could face a crisis should a Pope lapse into a coma or become mentally disabled. They point out that there are no procedures such as the 25th Amendment to the US Constitution that sets out a succession formula.

Only a pope can appoint bishops—an action taken weeks before they are announced—or create dioceses. He cannot delegate some aspects of his authority, such as infallibility. *AP*

John Paul better; Vatican sees Sunday audience

VATICAN CITY—Pope John Paul II is making a steady recovery from flu and breathing difficulties and Vatican officials hope he will be strong enough to address Roman Catholic faithful this Sunday from his hospital suite.

In a brief statement on Thursday, the Vatican said the 84-year-old Pontiff had spent a peaceful second night in Rome's Gemelli hospital, that his throat ailment was "in regression" and that he had not suffered any further spasms.

"The Holy Father's general condition and his respiratory condition are evolving positively," the statement said.

The frail leader of the world's Roman Catholics, who fell ill with influenza at the weekend, was rushed to hospital on Tuesday after suffering a momentary blockage to his breathing.

Vatican spokesperson Joaquin Navarro-Valls told reporters medical tests had produced "satisfactory results."

Asked when the Pope might leave hospital, he told reporters: "It will be up to the doctors to decide. However, in my experience, we're talking about seven days..."

POPE JOHN PAUL II

Vatican sources said the Pope would almost certainly make an address from the hospital on Sunday at noon, the time he normally delivers his weekly blessing in St. Peter's Square.

But they said it was still not clear if it would be live from the window of his 10th floor hospital room or from inside and whether it would be live or pre-recorded.

However, a meeting with US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice planned for Tuesday was cancelled and she will see Secretary of State Cardinal Angelo Sodano instead, Vatican sources said. *Reuters*

Mandela cry: Freedom for 'slaves' of poverty

LONDON—Former South African president Nelson Mandela Thursday demanded freedom for the millions of "slaves" of poverty worldwide on the eve of a meeting in London of the world's richest nations.

"Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural," Mandela told a cheering crowd at London's Trafalgar Square before he meets the finance ministers from the Group of Seven (G7) industrialized nations on Friday.

"It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings. And overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice," Mandela said.

During the rally, the 86-year-old Nobel Peace Prize winner endorsed the "Make Poverty History" coalition, which seeks to pressure world leaders into fulfilling promises to increase aid for the poor, improve trade justice and provide further debt relief.

He urged action from the gathering of G8 leaders in Scotland in July, during the rally in Trafalgar Square, the scene of many anti-apartheid demonstrations in the 1970s and 1980s.

"It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life. While poverty persists there is no true freedom," Mandela said.

Mandela, who was due to meet British Prime Minister Tony Blair and International Development Secretary Hilary Benn later in the day, described massive poverty and inequality as the "terrible scourges of our times."

"They have to rank alongside slavery and apartheid as social evil," he said.

Accompanied by his wife Grace Machel, he thanked Britons for their support during his 27-year imprisonment in South Africa, and rallied the audience of more than 10,000 to further activism.

"In this century, millions of people in the world's poorest countries remain imprisoned, enslaved and in chains. They are trapped in the prison of poverty. It is time to set them free," he said.

The anti-apartheid hero is backing efforts by the British government to put Africa at the top of the international agenda, a decision that Benn called "hugely significant."

"To see Nelson Mandela (in Trafalgar Square)—that is an illustration of how what was unthinkable apparently one day, one year, can become possible the next and that should give us encouragement in this task," Benn said in an interview.

Finance Minister Gordon Brown, who met Mandela on Wednesday, will pitch his "Marshall Plan for Africa" to fellow G7 finance ministers, calling for massive debt relief and a doubling of global aid to the developing world, to reach $100 billion annually. *AFP*

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NOTICE TO STOCKHOLDERS OF GLOBE TELECOM, INC.

All shareholders are hereby notified that Globe's Board of Directors approved an offer to purchase one share for every fifteen shares of the outstanding common stock of Globe (par value P50) from all shareholders of record as of 10 February 2005, at a price of P950 per share. The approval allows Globe to purchase up to 9,326,924 shares representing 6.67% of its outstanding common shares. Each shareholder is entitled to tender a proportionate number of shares owned at the 1:15 ratio for purchase by Globe upon and subject to the terms and conditions of the tender offer. Shares purchased on the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) on or after 7 February 2005 will not be eligible for tender to Globe.

The tender offer commences at 9:00 am on 3 February 2005 and ends at 3:00 pm on 2 March 2005.

Shareholders will be sent a copy of the terms and conditions, the tender form, other relevant information and the tender offer report filed by Globe with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC Form 19-1). These are also available from the Depositary or the PSE.

A valid tender of shares shall be made through the delivery of the duly-completed tender form and must be received by the Depositary prior to the end of the tender offer period, along with the following:

If you are a CORPORATION, PARTNERSHIP OR TRUST:

A. Duly endorsed Share Certificates (unless the tender of Shares is through a book-entry transfer, in which case the Depositary must receive a Book-Entry Confirmation with respect to the Shares being tendered on or before the end of the Tender Offer Period);

B. A notarized Secretary's Certificate or its equivalent;
   (i) setting forth resolutions of the tendering Stockholder's Board of Directors or equivalent body authorizing the sale of the Shares and designating the signatories for the purpose; and
   (ii) certifying to the authenticity of the copies of the tendering Stockholder's SEC Certificate of Registration, Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws or other equivalent constitutive documents,

C. Certified true copies of its Articles of Incorporation and By-laws and latest amendments thereof, and

D. A duly accomplished signature card containing the specimen signatures of its authorized signatories validated by the Corporate Secretary and verified by its broker (the name of the broker and the broker's signatory must be specified) or officer of the bank (the name of the bank and the bank's officer must be specified) where it is maintaining an account.

If you are an INDIVIDUAL:

A. Duly endorsed Share Certificates (unless the tender of Shares is through a book-entry transfer, in which case the Depositary must receive a Book-Entry Confirmation with respect to the Shares being tendered on or before the end of the Tender Offer Period);

B. Two valid identification cards with the Stockholder's photo and specimen signature,

C. A duly accomplished signature card containing the specimen signature of the Stockholder verified by his broker (the name of the broker and the broker's signatory must be specified) or an officer of the bank (the name of the bank and the bank's officer must be specified) where he is maintaining an account; and

D. A duly notarized Special Power of Attorney if he is acting through an attorney-in-fact.

Shareholders who decide to tender their shares should complete and execute the tender form and, together with the documentary requirements, deliver the same, either personally or through their PSE member stock brokers, to the Depositary at ATR-Kim Eng Securities, Inc., 17th Floor, Tower One & Exchange Plaza, Ayala Avenue, Makati City, Telephone No. (63-2) 849-8888, (Attention: Nilaida S. Enriquez) while the tender offer remains open.

Subject to appropriate verification and acceptance procedures, as well as the terms and conditions of the tender offer, Globe intends to accept validly tendered shares on 8 March 2005 and will send notices of any unaccepted or partially accepted tenders beginning 9 March 2005. All applications not covered by such notices shall be considered accepted. All accepted shares are expected to be crossed on the PSE on 15 March 2005, subject to the approval of the PSE. Following the cross of the shares, payment is expected to be made on 16 March 2005.

GLOBE TELECOM

TENDER FORM

Application to Tender Shares of Globe Telecom, Inc.

This Application must be prepared in quadruplicate and completed in all parts.	
White	Globe
Blue	Depository
Green	Transfer Agent
Yellow	Tendering Stockholder

This Tender Form (the "Application") has been prepared for Stockholders of Globe Telecom, Inc. ("Globe" or the "Company") who wish to tender their common shares in the capital stock of the Company with a par value of P50 (the "Shares") to Globe at the rate of 1 Share for every 15 Shares owned. Each Stockholder is advised to read and understand the Letter to Stockholders from the Board of Directors of Globe and the provisions of the terms and conditions relating to this Tender Offer (the "Terms and Conditions") provided with this Tender Form, prior to making an investment decision. Inquiries and requests for additional copies of the Terms and Conditions or the Tender Form may be directed to ATR-Kim Eng Securities, Inc., 17th Floor, Tower One & Exchange Plaza, Ayala Avenue, Makati City, Telephone No. (63-2) 849-8888 (Contact Person: Nilaida S. Enriquez (the "Depositary"). This Application, together with the Required Attachments set forth below, must be received by the Depositary not later than 3:00 p.m. on March 2, 2005, unless extended or terminated earlier at the discretion of Globe. Globe reserves the right to accept or reject this Application in accordance with the Terms and Conditions. Do not complete this application if you are not offering shares for purchase by Globe.

Application Number

REPRESENTATIONS & WARRANTIES

I/We, in executing this Application, represent and warrant that: (a) all information contained herein and the required attached documents are true and correct and that the signatures thereon are genuine, properly authorized, and obtained without the use of fraud, coercion or any other vice of consent; (b) I/We am/are qualified to receive this Tender Offer in every respect and that I/We are eligible to submit this Application without violation of any applicable laws and regulations in any relevant jurisdiction; (c) the tendered Shares are fully paid and non-assessable, free and clear of any claims, liens, encumbrances, charges or any restrictions apart from those specified in the Articles of Incorporation of the Company and that upon Globe's acceptance and tender of payment for the tendered Shares, in accordance with the Terms and Conditions, Globe shall: (i) obtain full and valid title to such Shares free from any liens, claims or encumbrances; and (ii) be able to freely and fully exercise all rights and privileges arising from ownership of such Shares, including but not limited to the right to vote and receive dividends; (d) I/We have read and understood the provisions of the Terms and Conditions, and unconditionally accept said Terms and Conditions. I/We understand that no person has been authorized to give any information or make any representation with respect to the Tender Offer other than those representations specified in the Terms and Conditions.

Stockholder's Full Name (in print)	Stockholder's Address		
Stockholder's Signature	Tel. No(s).	T.I.N./Passport No.	Nationality

APPLICATION

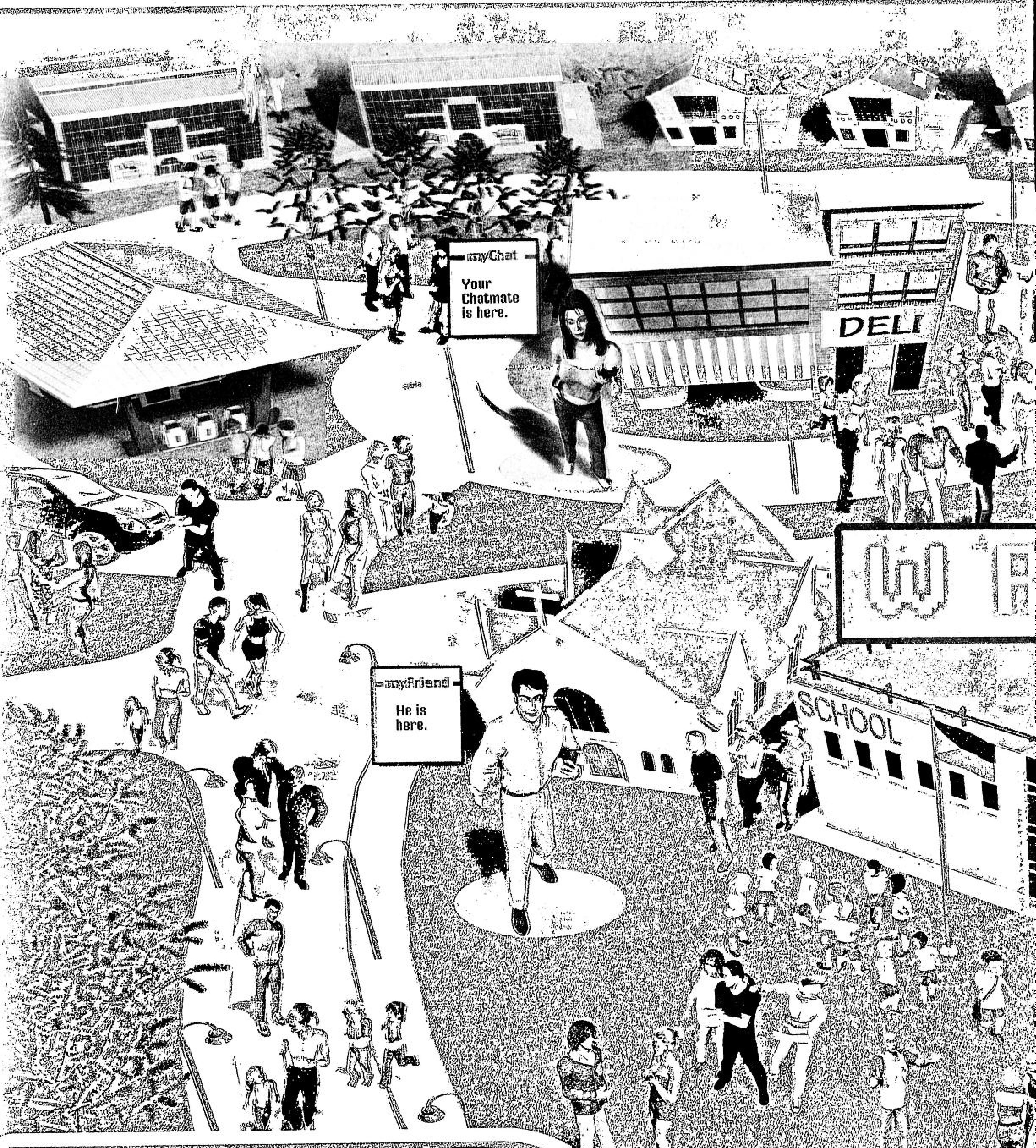
I/We apply to tender Shares of Globe Telecom, Inc under the Terms and Conditions of the Tender Offer, as follows.

Certificate Number(s) or Book Entry Confirmation	Number of Shares* Represented by each Certificate/Book Entry Confirmation	Corresponding Number of Shares* Tendered at the Tender Ratio of 1 Share* for Every 15 Shares* Owned	Price per Share*	Gross Price Shares* Tendered
			P950.00	
TOTAL				

*At a par value of P50.00 per Share

APPLICATION	
We received this Application, with all the Required Attachments below, at _______ a.m./p.m. on _________________, 2005.	
Depository	ATR-KIM ENG SECURITIES, INC.
Authorized Signature	

APPLICATION	
This Application is hereby accepted for _____________ Shares subject to the terms and conditions set forth herein.	
	Globe Telecom, Inc.
Authorized Signature	



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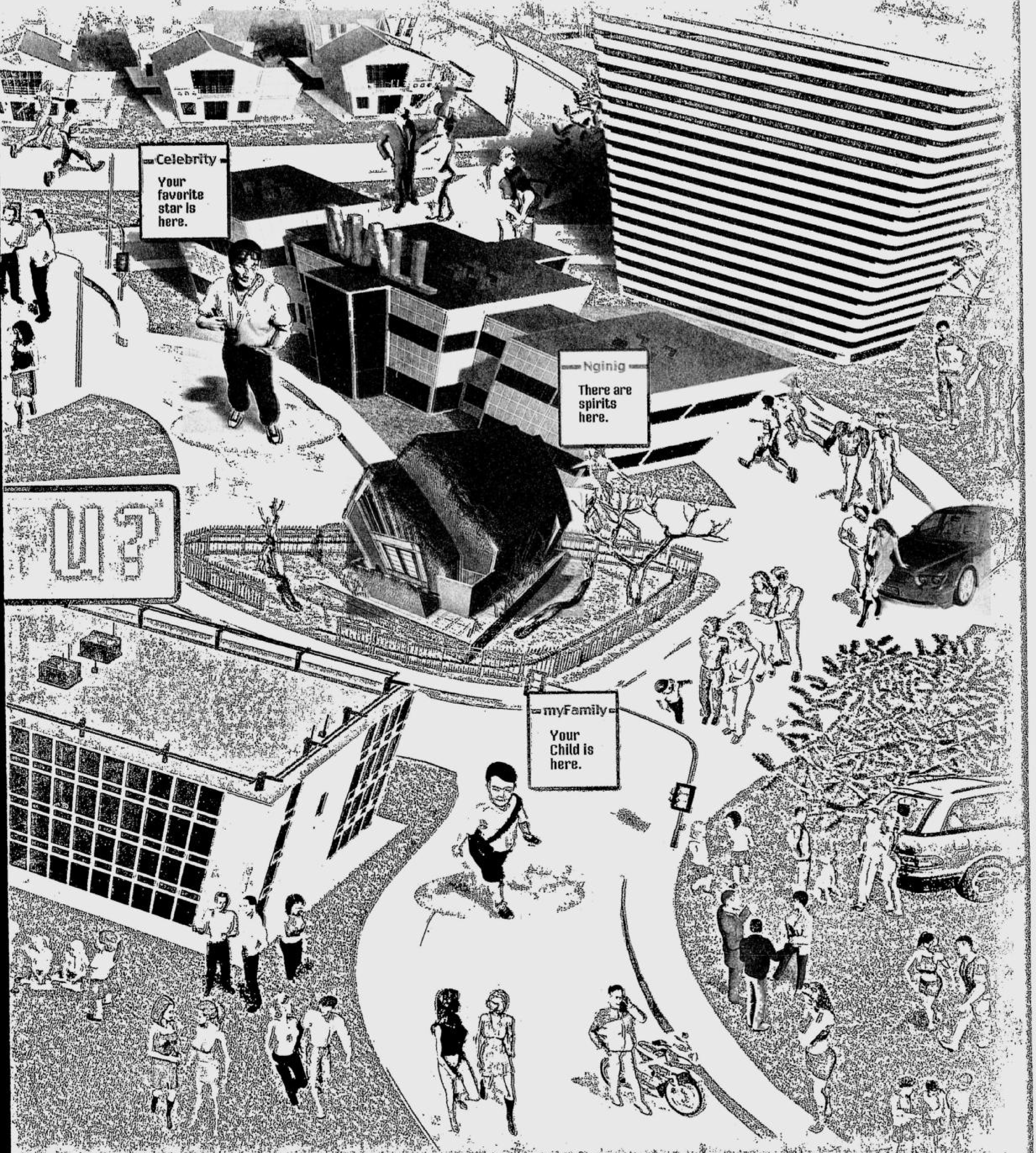
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ISSN 0116-2642
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THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 / 528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.

Publisher **Isagani Yambot**
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Quantity over quality

EDITORIAL

TWO developments have brought to the fore once more the woeful state of our education system: one is the finding by the British Council that there are too many colleges and universities that are "diluting" the quality of higher education, and the other is the renewed call to increase the number of years in basic education from 10 to 11 and even 12 in order for the country to be at par with the rest of the world. The call was again made in reaction to reports that among 45 nations whose basic-education students were graded in science and mathematics aptitude, the Philippines ended up 44th.

The call was nothing new. The Presidential Commission on Educational Reform during the Estrada administration had recommended that another year be added to the basic education program. But it is doubtful whether an added year to basic education would do the trick. Another year of elementary or high school means more resources poured into the education system, resources that may fall prey to the Pacman instincts of our voracious politicians. Big chunks of the additional investments in school buildings, teachers and textbooks may end up in the pockets of pork barrel-hungry politicians and their cronies.

Quantity, it appears, has a doubtful bearing on quality. This is shown by the British Council critique of higher education. While the 1,380 universities and colleges all over the country provide easy access to higher education—just as the thousands of public schools that congressmen are fond of establishing provide admittance to basic education to millions—there's no assurance that the quality of education is excellent and responsible. Again, the question of resources here is relevant. As Gill Westaway of the British Council said, "In a country like the Philippines, where resources are scarce, it's better to have fewer universities with quality rather than allowing hundreds of universities that are diluting the overall quality."

Obviously there ought to be a moratorium on establishment of new colleges and universities, particularly state colleges and universities (SCUs), whose number has grown tremendously since the 1980s, and many of which have charters shielding them from effective monitoring by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). SCUs have become the favorite creations of national and local politicians. One in Pampanga was reported to have conferred more than a hundred doctorate degrees in a year, outpacing even much bigger and established higher institutions.

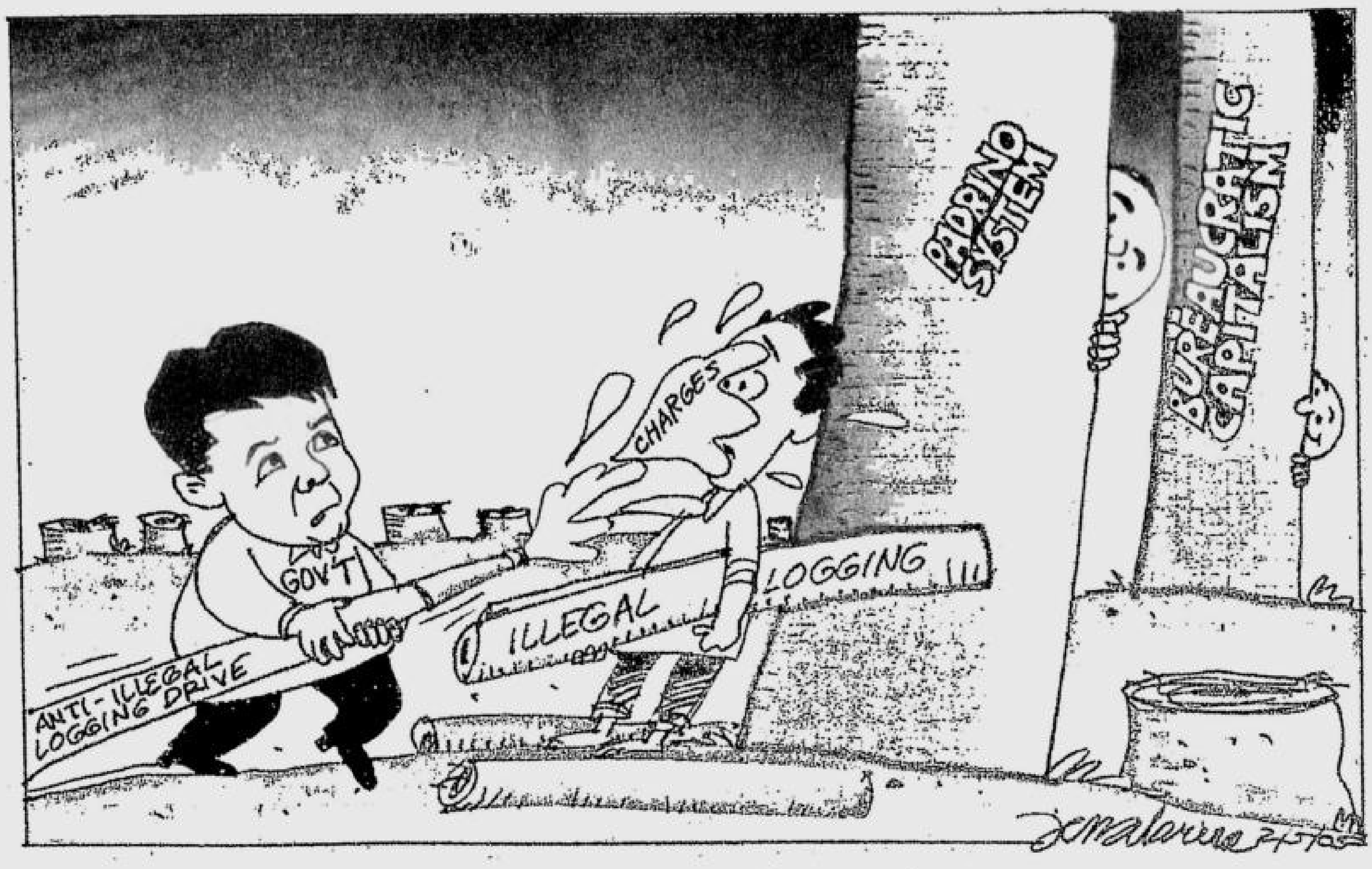
Why SCUs continue to grow in number despite the dubious education they provide has something to do with resources. It seems that politicians have found a new way to tap resources by building new schools, which also means new hirings and new allocations for classrooms, supplies and textbooks. Even Calamba has its own university!

How politics is killing our education system is very clear in the political pressure being brought to bear on the CHED to recall its order closing down 23 nursing schools nationwide. Several lawmakers led by Las Piñas Rep. Cynthia Villar, head of the House committee on education, met CHED officials and demanded they rescind the order.

The CHED, led by its chair, Fr. Rolando de la Rosa, O.P., defended the closure, saying it was meant to arrest the decline in nursing education, as proven by the decline in the passing rate of the nursing board exam from 49 percent to 43 percent as well as findings that nearly a fourth of nursing schools had passing rates of less than 30 percent. The order, in fact, has met acclaim here and abroad. Foreign hospitals that rely on the Philippines for nurses have welcomed the move, saying that the quality of nursing education should not be compromised for commercial—and political—interests. But the lawmakers, who two years ago passed the nursing law empowering the CHED and the Board of Nursing Education to do everything to ensure the quality of nursing education, insisted on the recall of the CHED order.

Could the CHED turn to Malacañang for help? Alas, there's no reprieve. Even without hearing the side of CHED, Malacañang recently ordered the lifting of the ban on a nursing school put up overnight by an influential computer school to capitalize on the nursing frenzy.

The CHED is trying to nurse education back to health. But our lawmakers and Malacañang, who seem to want to nurse their own pockets and shady political ambitions, are pummeling it to death.



In aid of grandstanding

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

I'M among the many people who have no sympathy for Lt. Gen. Jacinto Ligot who is facing charges of unexplained wealth and other related serious crimes allegedly committed during his term as comptroller of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. I know he is entitled to the presumption of innocence guaranteed by the Bill of Rights to every person accused of a crime, no matter how dark his past or repellent his record. But in the particular case of Ligot, the consensus even now is that there is enough heavy evidence against him as reported by the media. This should overturn that constitutional presumption of his innocence to one of obvious guilt.

Ligot and his family reportedly own valuable real estate here, including farms in Mindanao, a condominium unit in Taguig, and as well two buildings in California worth millions of dollars. He has expensive cars he could not have acquired with his modest income in the AFP. Government records show that his wife has traveled abroad as many as 28 times since 1998. There is also some doubt regarding the financial provenance of his young children who are registered as independent owners of properties suspected as actually belonging to Ligot. He is said to have admitted that he had no substantial assets when he entered the military service compared to his vast alleged landholdings and investments as now revealed.

On one matter, however, I am in full agreement with the general. That is the stand he took last week against his investigation for unexplained wealth by the committee on national defense of the House of Representatives. When subjected to questioning by its members, he is said to have invoked as many as 21 times his right against self-incrimination safeguarded by Sec. 17 of Art. III of the Constitution. His basic position was that the committee had no authority to investigate him because the probe was not supposed to be "in aid of legislation," as required by Art. VI, Sec. 21, of the Constitution. He claimed that he was being investigated instead "in aid of prosecution."

I agree; the beleaguered general has a point. But I would amend that valid argument and say that the investigation was (or is, if it is being continued by the honorable congressmen) "in aid of another grandstanding."

I do not see how it can be excused as in aid of legislation because there are enough laws that already cover the alleged offenses of Ligot unless the committee believes that they are still inadequate to prevent their repetition in the future. The accusation against him is authorized under the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act. There are special laws prohibiting the gifting of public functionaries for past or expected official favors, granting immunity to bribers of public officials, increasing the penalty for swindling, establishing a code of conduct for government personnel, defining and penalizing the crime of plunder, and reimposing the death penalty for certain heinous crimes, together with the provisions in the Revised Penal Code against Crimes Committed by Public Officers and other related offenses.

Any addition to these laws cannot apply to Ligot because it would be *ex post facto* if also unnecessary. Perhaps the House committee members want again to engage in another useless exhibition of their importance to excite their easily impressed constituents.

Ligot's charge that his investigation is being conducted in aid of prosecution exposes the real purpose of the congressmen, which is to cast themselves as cowboys out to get the villain in the person of the unpopular Ligot. They are publicity hounds exploiting the predicament of their quarry by further scandalizing him for the benefit of the public eager for blood in the *cause celebre*. Where they should be attending to their main function, which is to legislate against the major problems of the country like the deteriorating economy, the increasing criminality and, yes, the insistent and irremovable pork barrel, they would fritter away their valuable time by assuming a task that does not belong to them and for which they are ill-prepared.

The investigation of Ligot is already being handled by the Office of the Ombudsman, which is the agency charged by the Constitution and the laws to prosecute cases against public functionaries for offenses connected with their official duties. The personnel of this independent constitutional body are trained and experienced investigators and prosecutors, unlike the members of the House of Representatives, many of whom are not even trained legislators. The chair of the committee on national defense, Rep. Roilo Golez, is not even a lawyer, much less an experienced investigator. Yet he and his fellow probers are having a field day in flaunting their supposed expertise as pretentious cross-examiners. Their recalcitrant witness has effectively silenced them, however, with a constitutional liberty they could not ignore.

Leave the investigators to their task, gentlemen, and attend to your real work in Congress without shameless fanfare. If what you want is undeserved public acclaim, be a movie star like the three misfits in the Senate.

Careful with those statistics

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

THE PUBLIC has been deluged by all kinds of numbers of late. Aside from the conventional statistics—on GDP, employment and unemployment, the exchange rate, inflation and the deficit—the fiscal crisis has focused attention on the financial status of government corporations as well as the revenue impact of the various "reforms" designed to avert a financial collapse.

Everybody seems to be either spouting numbers or reacting to them: praising, blaming, doubting, disbelieving, and in general using them to promote their various agendas as well as to get much-desired media exposure. The effect is to create even more confusion, calling to mind the statement about lies, damned lies, and statistics, with poor Juan and Juana de la Cruz at a loss on what or whom to believe.

Let's try to make some sense out of the confusion or separate the chaff from the grain, as it were.

Take the statement: "The people can't eat statistics" (attributed to former President Joseph Estrada). Nobody says they can. But accurate, timely and regular statistics are necessary to monitor the performance of the economy and the well-being of its people, and, in turn, help them evaluate the performance of their leaders. Think of what would happen if decisions affecting Filipinos were made solely on the basis of anecdotal evidence or "gut feel."

What Erap must be driving at is that a country's economic growth does not automatically redound to the benefit of the people. In this, he is absolutely correct. Growth is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for development, as emphasized by all texts on economic development as well as the UNDP Human Development Reports. There is a "right" kind and a "wrong" kind of growth, the latter being growth that does not lead to human development, such as jobless (rather than employment-creating), futureless (rather than sustainable), voiceless (undemocratic, non-participatory), ruthless (the benefits of growth are not equitably distributed) and rootless (leading to cultural destruction) growth.

Erap obviously doubts that the country's growth is the right kind. (He should know whereof he speaks: during his watch, the number of people employed actually decreased and poverty incidence increased.) But worse than that, there is doubt (expressed by people like Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile) that there has been growth at all.

Understand, Juan and Juana, that when the national income estimates are released, it is practically SOP that doubts are cast on their accuracy, except when they show low growth or contraction. Which casts doubt on the doubters' themselves, most of whom, you may notice, are members of the opposition. But in fairness to them, print and broadcast media also seem to be guilty of the same accurate-if-low-inaccurate-if-high mentality. Is one group feeding the other? Or is it congenitally difficult to think, after such a long period of mediocre performance, that the Philippines is capable of success?

I have said it before, and I will say it again: Our National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) and our National Census and Statistics Office (NSO) are headed and staffed by competent, respected professionals. Having said that, I also must say that in the past year, certain inconsistencies among the different economic data sets have been spotted by economic analysts. What these inconsistencies are will be the subject of another column. Suffice it to say that they are disturbing enough so that workshops on both poverty and national income estimation are scheduled in the upcoming annual meeting of the Philippine Economic Society to discuss methodological and other issues with the statisticians.

The numbers, though, that cause the greatest incredulity are those used to show the impact of certain revenue measures—P35 billion for this, P17 billion for that, P72 billion for the other, etc. Beware, Juan and Juana. Some of them are based on nothing but a vivid imagination. The "sin tax" revenues, for one, and the lateral attrition bill, for another. In the case of the latter, a check with the Department of Finance and the Bureau of Internal Revenue, which would ordinarily be the source, revealed that neither of them knew where the P10-billion estimate came from.

Then there is the "irrational exuberance" over the appreciation of the peso by the administration (and the media, alas), complete with predictions of "breaching" the P53 mark by the end of the year. Certainly, there are benefits to be derived from the appreciation of the peso: peso-denominated expenditures on interest and amortization of foreign debt are reduced (roughly 80 centavos less per dollar of debt servicing involved) and the peso cost of highly import-dependent products, particularly petroleum and electricity (with their foreign exchange rate adjustments), goes down. But the other side of the coin is that Philippine products are now going to be less price-competitive (if the dollar is cheaper, the peso becomes more expensive) and less attractive. Foreign exchange earners (exporters, overseas Filipino workers) are therefore disadvantaged. Exports are discouraged, imports are encouraged. Is that really cause for jubilation? This aside from the problems caused by "hot money" inflows, of course.

The bottom line: Beware of mishandling the statistics. Credibility, once lost, is hard to regain. That goes for the administration, the opposition and the statistical agencies.

* * *

ERRATUM: In my column last week, the second sentence of the fourth paragraph should have read: "Deformed, because the structure became **inequitable** (not "impregnable" as wrongly encoded), with coverage narrowed down to those who were not politically strong ..."

Ombudsman deserves additional budget

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

OMBUDSMAN Simeon Marcelo admitted in the Sunday dzRH program that Cecile Alvarez and I co-host (aired tomorrow at 9:15 p.m.) that he has not slept well in recent days. This is because he is worried that the Senate might not pass the P140 million that the House recently allocated as additional operational budget for his office. I would strongly endorse to the senators a favorable action on this item as this would give the Office of the Ombudsman more teeth to fight corruption. Marcelo is definitely among the most credible people in government today.

* * *

Marcelo pointed out that over 8,000 corruption cases were reported to his office in 2002 and this shot up to over 12,000 last year. He reads this not so much as an increase in corruption as as a sign of a surge in confidence in his office's determination to run after corrupt personnel. But he has to be armed with the proper resources, and to him this is the test of government's determination to combat corruption. At the moment his office has 56 prosecutors but he needs around 150 prosecutors, and 200 more investigators. He laments that at times cases do not prosper in court for lack of evidence.

Three months into the job in 2002, Marcelo sent people to Hong Kong to see why its famous Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) was very successful in its anti-corruption fight. He learned that 80 percent of the ICAC's budget went to the payment of salaries and training of investigators. (Deputy Commissioner for Investigation Tony Kuok has since given workshops here.) Right now Marcelo has only 17 investigators assigned to the BIR and Customs, but if he is given more funds, he says, "*tututukan ko talaga ang mga opisinang iyon.*" Ultimately, he reasons, the bigger funds for salaries of investigators and prosecutors will pay off, as the BIR and Customs people will be more reluctant to get into shady deals with the Ombudsman carefully watching them. I might add that it could help reverse the culture of corruption in those offices.

* * *

Marcelo is also preparing for submission to the Supreme Court a proposal to make radical changes in the Sandiganbayan, where cases filed by his office end up. Right now, Sen. Mar Roxas is drafting a bill that seeks to increase the number of divisions in the graft court from 5 to 10, in order to speed up resolution of the 1,800 graft cases filed before it. This will require an additional allocation of P115 million. But while waiting for Roxas' bill to go through the legislative mill, Marcelo will propose to the SC that it authorize the Sandiganbayan to concentrate on the 40 biggest cases and farm out the graft cases involving P1 million or less (which constitute 40 percent of the cases) to the lower courts.

At the moment, says Marcelo, a graft case before the Sandiganbayan takes nearly seven years to resolve. The justices are quick to resolve a case once the trial is finished, notes Marcelo, but the trial itself takes time due to work overload. For instance, he notes that the first hearing on the Espinosa case was held last month, but the next has been set for April yet. Truly, justice delayed is justice denied.

* * *

Marcelo points out that Filipinos tend to look at the negative side of things, such as Transparency International ranking RP as No. 11 among the most corrupt, but we fail to look at the silver lining, such as the growing involvement of citizens in the anti-corruption campaign. As a result of his talk before Catholic bishops last July, the latter, together with the Makati Business Club, helped form the Coalition Against Corruption (CAC). A few days ago, the CAC signed a memorandum with Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz for private citizens to help monitor the AFP's notorious bidding process and the implementation of contracts. Marcelo is elated that groups have sprouted around the country to help in the anti-corruption campaign, such as the "Barug" group of diocesan priests in Cebu, led by Fr. Melo Diola, the Citizens Group for Good Governance in Abra and the inter-faith People's Graft Watch in Iloilo.

* * *

Marcelo also praised the organization of "G-Watch" by the Ateneo School of Governance, which involves the recruitment of boy and girl scouts to monitor deliveries of books and supplies to public schools. The scouts check the deliveries against the contracts, and the Department of Education won't issue payment without their signatures.

Marcelo is thinking of recruiting retirees with special skills that can be harnessed for monitoring the bidding of public works projects and the implementation of contracts. I suggested involving also housewives, and I have in mind my good friend Baby Ledesma Caparas, the militant wife of famed ENT specialist Dr. Mariano Caparas. For while many citizens wring their hands in despair over the corruption in our midst, unless we help, the government can only do so much.

* * *

This column has endorsed and publicized the Retrouvaille weekend healing program for troubled married couples for several years now, because I have seen how it has helped many couples rebuild their failing relationships. It has helped even separated couples to get back together and rekindle their love. There have been instances when couples, who don't talk to each other anymore or who come to the Retrouvaille weekend in separate cars, find themselves on the way to healing their relationships after undergoing the program. For those with failing relationships, another Retrouvaille weekend will be held, fortuitously on the Valentine weekend, Feb. 11 to 13, at the Mother of Mercy Spiritual Center, SVD Road, Tagaytay City. For details call Fr. Dave Clay at 0918-902-0511 and 523-3361 and 525-0308, or Tessie at 0917-538-8970, or Nes and Inday at 0916-443-8346 and 938-9719. No better way for couples with dimming relationships to spend Valentine.

Recognizing 'LGBT' rights

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

TWO officers of the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) were recently in the country and were treated to a show of Filipino hospitality and the recognition by Filipino officialdom of the rights and dignity of all, regardless of sexual orientation.

Rosanna Flamer-Caldera, co-secretary general of ILGA, and Patricia Curzi, ILGA Women's Project officer, met with legislators recently to update them on LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) issues worldwide, stressing the need to recognize these same issues and address them through laws in our country. In turn, they were given a memorable reception.

In a meeting with Representatives Liza Maza, Satur Ocampo, Josefina Joson and Teofisto Guingona III, Flamer-Caldera and Curzi informed them of the upcoming ILGA Asia Regional Conference which takes place in Cebu this June. The legislators unanimously pledged their support for the conference. At the same time, the results of a study conducted by Can't Live in the Closet (CLIC), a local lesbian rights group, on "Domestic Violence in Same-Sex Relationships" were presented to the lawmakers, who proceeded to discuss its implications.

"We were all encouraged by (their) response to our requests and their willingness to further LGBT causes within the government," Flamer-Caldera commented afterwards. "I was also so heartened by the fact that we were able to actually meet with government officials for informal meetings, a thing that is unheard of in many countries in Asia and elsewhere."

For her part, Curzi said she was "pleasantly surprised to note how many initiatives are taken by organizations here in the Philippines on gender-related issues and how well they are received by government representatives who take the time to meet with them, discuss and give their commitment to these initiatives."

* * *

REPRESENTATIVES Maza and Ocampo later presented the ILGA officers to the House of Representatives at the Session Hall. "It was a great honor for ILGA to be recognized by the government...I am sure it was the first time an LGBT organization was made welcome by the House and Speaker. Amid a sea of over 1,500 spectators and over 200 representatives, ILGA was asked to be recognized and our group was asked to stand and wave to the crowd to acknowledge who we were. We were all very moved and very proud," said Flamer-Caldera.

Earlier that day, at the flag-raising ceremony at the Quezon City Hall, the delegation from ILGA, CLIC, Progay and Cebu Pride was formally welcomed by Mayor Sonny Belmonte and the city councilors. Belmonte told the group that "we encourage all sexual orientations and gender identities here in Quezon City. In fact, we host and finance umbrella NGOs that work on gender-related issues."

Bills penalizing discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation are pending in the House, and though the media and opposers have tended to highlight only the so-called "same-sex marriage" provisions, the bills actually cover the rights of sexual minorities in the spheres of employment, social security, health services and other aspects of life and citizenship.

* * *

HERE'S another young Filipino we can all be proud of. John Piermont Montilla recently won the "Global Youth Leader Award" conferred on him by YouthActionNet of the International Youth Foundation.

John Piermont, or Pier to his friends, is the founding president of Kabataang Gabay sa Positibong Pamumuhay (Gabay) Inc. (Peers for a Positive Way of Life)—an organization of young peer counselors who took on the task of educating at-risk Filipino youth about HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Gabay was among the first awardees of the Ten Accomplished Youth Organizations (Tayo), and its recognition by Tayo in 2003 gave the organization national recognition and a hefty cash grant which was earmarked to finance continuing projects.

Tayo Awards is a national search that aims to recognize outstanding youth organizations that leave a positive impact on a community. It is the brain-child of Sen. Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan and is being carried out together with the National Youth Commission along with partner agencies Mirant Foundation-Philippines, the Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Philippine Daily Inquirer. Deadline for submission of entries to this year's search, which is the third year of Tayo, is on Feb. 15. Application forms are available in all NYC, DSWD and local government offices and various schools' office of student affairs. Forms can be downloaded from www.tayoawards.org and www.youth.net.ph

* * *

"UNDERSTANDING and Healing Wounded Relationships in the Light of the Gospel" is the theme of a "pre-Valentine" retreat from Feb. 12-13 to be held at the SVD Retreat House in Tagaytay City, within the Divine Word Seminary compound.

Next weekend's module is part of the regular Psychogenetics Retreat series facilitated by Fr. Ed Fugoso, SVD. After the weekend retreat, says Father Ed, participants should know more about:

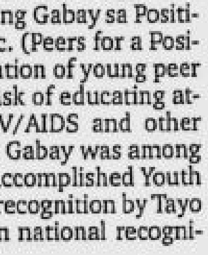
- **What controls your present adult behavior when under stress.**
- **Transgenerational patterns in marital relationships explored through psychogenetics.**
- **The imprint of your parents in your choice of spouse and how the "ghosts" of their conflicts affect your present marital relationship.**
- **The reimprint that can free you from committing the same pattern of mistakes.**

Psychogenetics is a scientific approach to understanding the influence of our parents and ancestors in our present adult behavior and relationships. It was developed by Anne Teachworth, founder of Gestalt Institute of New Orleans.

A "post-Valentine" retreat exploring the same theme will be conducted from March 5 to 6. For inquiries, call Father Ed at 0917-5414330 or Thess at (046) 4130340.

Some curiosities

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY



Bambi L. Harper

COTO Intang's gate, nearly perpendicular to the river, opened to an elevated street with a moat on both sides leading to a canal at the end that bounded the town. The town itself, consisting of some 150 houses, had existed for only a few years. Capt. Thomas Forrest traveled by canoe from Maguindanao up the Melampy for two miles, then turned right through many winding creeks for about three miles to reach Ampuyan on the banks of the river Tamantakka, four miles above its bar. He ascended the Tamantakka for some six miles to Tapidan where he stayed overnight with the rajah.

Early next morning, they sailed for about half a mile from Tamantakka into a small brook with a very "offensive" odor and taste. The brook came from the hill where the saltpeter cave was located.

After a mile, they again entered another brook of fresh water that brought them to the foot of the hill.

About a quarter of a mile up the hill was a hole about 10 feet in diameter. Forrest descended with the aid of some poles to a circular area 25 feet in diameter that would have been pitch-black were it not for a hole in its ceiling that provided some light. He then descended further down about six yards through a sloping passage that could admit only one person at a time and led to a round hall with a flat floor. From the top some 25 feet high, hung stalactites and on the sides were stalagmites rising some five to six feet to the dome like columns of Gothic architecture.

On the same level was another gallery measuring 200 yards and eight feet wide where an infinite number of bats seemed to be flying or clinging to the sides by little hooks on their wings. Returning, he saw another passage that went a good way and gave another outlet but none of the guides had ever explored it before. On the floor was "miry stuff" that was glutinous and stuck to his feet. To make saltpeter, they would mix one measure of this with two of wood ashes, filter it through water and produce gun powder. (Father Combes said that the bats in Maguindanao were as big as chickens and saltpeter was made from their excrement.)

Later he met the Rajah of Boyan who was a Muslim and called Oran Selam de Oolo. While there, the rajah paid a week-long visit to Rajah Mura bringing with him a large iron gun in his canoe. With him were his attendants armed with swords, shields and lances. During the day they remained on land but retired to their boats at night.

In case of war, the Rajah of Boyan was obliged to supply Maguindanao with a certain number of men and could have no contact with anyone outside the river without permission. Since the sea was the only egress, the sultan had him figuratively locked up unless he went by land through Lake Buloan.

Continuing in his travels, Forrest reached an island called Ebus with a beach of black sand. Some miles west of Bungabung, for about a mile from the beach, the ground was black and stony. It was said that 10 years before one of the mountains, six or seven miles inland, exploded, ejecting stones and black sand which covered a great part of the country. At Tubug near Pulo Ebus, Forrest observed fresh springs bursting out from among the black stones in various parts of the harbor. He was informed that there had once been a river there but it had been covered by detritus from the eruption.

The area around was now covered with tall grass called *lalang* and in some places reeds as high as 18 feet. During the eruption, black sand reached Sulu, some 20 leagues distant. Some inhabitants of the area ended up going to Tampassook and Tawarran on the west coast of Borneo in search of a better habitation.

The harbor of Tubug, about two miles south of the island Eubs, was the chief place for assembling *mangaio* or pirate prows. It was about 28 miles north by west of the bar of the Pelangy. Not 50 yards from the harbor was the rajah's house, strong palisaded and mounted with 20 brass swivel guns carrying each a ball about a pound in weight. All the guns were Spanish and must have been part of the war booty.

Zamboanga was Spain's stronghold in Mindanao and had a fort built of masonry close to the sea with a high wall. Not very large, it had a church and many houses outside the walls protected by the cannons of the fort. There was a swamp that acted as a natural moat beside the fort that had islands around, and on one of these, the Spaniards kept hogs. Basilan belonged to Sulu.

Zacharias, governor of Zamboanga, was reported to have gotten 20 ounces of gold dust in 20 days with a hundred men from the Curuan River. The chief places for gold were supposedly Curuan, Tikboo, Labangan, Tubuan and Eu near Kalagan. Under the Spaniards were Emilou, Cagayan, Surigao, Capasahan, Butuan, Adon, Ebon, Leangan and Epunan (remember Forrest must have written the names down as he heard them).

The garrison consisted of 40 or 50 American-Spaniards, a few native Spaniards and about a hundred Visayans. They were paid two Spanish dollars a month. The Spaniards in Manila would transport convicts to Zamboanga much as England did to America and later to Australia.

(Data from Capt. Thomas Forrest, "A Voyage to New Guinea, and the Moluccas, from Balambangan," 1780.)

* * *

Comments to bambiharper@yahoo.com

'Noypi'

YOUNG BLOOD

Sharwin L. Tee

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

A FEW months ago, I accompanied my brother to Guam where he represented the Philippines in the World Bowling Youth Championships. I joined the parents and other supporters in cheering for our young bowlers who played very well while maintaining a certain class and camaraderie which the participants from other countries respected and envied. But it was there where I had a most interesting and infuriating experience.

One day an old Filipino resident of Guam approached me to ask why an American was coaching our team. I explained that the American was actually our assistant coach and that the head coach was a Filipino. Not satisfied with my answer, he asked why our assistant coach should be an American. Did this mean no Filipino could handle the job? he demanded.

I was beginning to see what he was getting at, so I stopped myself from saying that the American was one of the best coaches anywhere in the world, and just said he was there because he could give us a different, a Western view of bowling.

Still looking unsatisfied, he asked me a question that at once incensed me. "*Eh ikaw?*" he said. "*Hindi ka naman Pilipino 'di ba*(How about you? You are not a Filipino, are you)?" That question has continued ringing in my ears since that day.

That time though, I remembered the Filipino value of respecting one's elders so I resisted the urge to tell him off and politely explained that I was born in the Philippines and I lived there.

His response was worse than his question: "*Eh, hindi ba Chek-in ka?*"

I was too stunned to answer him and I went back to cheering for our team. I wanted to understand what was wrong with the man. He saw me cheering for the Philippine team, and more importantly, he talked to me in Filipino. Yet, this man still considered me Chinese—and worse, "Chek-in"—and not Filipino.

I started to think about nationalism and what being a Filipino meant, and I realized how distorted his definition of being a Filipino was. For this man, and no doubt for many others here in the Philippines, the concept of a Chinese-Filipino and our community continue to be something mysterious and, sadly, gravely misunderstood. The mere term "Chek-in" or "Intsik" is an indication of that, since they are considered as insults by some Chinese-Filipinos.

I had an interesting visit to a friend's house once. Upon my arrival, my friend's mother greeted me with a warm smile but she did not speak to me. I later found out from my friend that his mother asked him discreetly if I could speak Filipino. We both had a good laugh over that, but I also had to shake my head over her misgivings.

For the record, I can speak English, Filipino and Chinese. Like most Chinese-Filipinos, I can speak English and Filipino fluently but struggle to speak fluent Chinese at times. Also, for the record, I do not enjoy chicken feet and the black and pungent "*sibut*" soup. Moreover, not all Chinese-Filipinos are good at math. I almost flunked my high school math and I had to take a remedial course on the subject when I went to college. Furthermore, I am a devout Catholic. Buddha is somebody I studied about in college, not somebody I pray to. Lastly, if a war breaks out between China and the Philippines, I will fight with the Filipino people. I have no connections to China. I feel no loyalty for that country as I consider it a foreign land.

Don't get me wrong. I am proud of my Chinese heritage. In fact, I try to share the beauties of Chinese culture, like the moon cake festival and the Chinese New Year with my friends, but I am a Filipino and I make sure everyone knows that.

It was only lately that I realized why that man in Guam infuriated me so much. It was not that his questions betrayed his bigotry. What made me angry was how horribly imprecise his definition of being a Filipino was. Being a true Filipino is never about race. After all, being *kayumanggi* does not make one a Filipino. Malays, Thais and Indonesians are also sometimes *kayumanggi*. I had hoped that the first "Mano Po" film would have made this point clear.

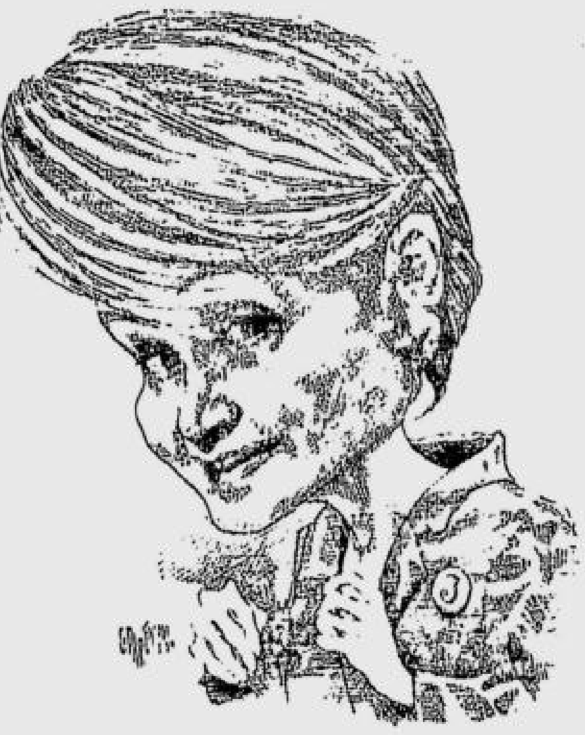
A true Filipino is one who respects his elders and knows how to repay a debt of gratitude. He is one who respects the law and works hard to make the Philippines a better place to live in. He is one who, at the end of the day, loves the Philippines and proudly proclaims himself to be a Filipino.

I am a typical Chinese-Filipino. I have Chinese blood. I have a light complexion and I have slits for eyes. I speak Chinese and I admit that I enjoy *siomai* and other dimsum items. Do these make me a non-Filipino? I beg to disagree. I love the Philippines and I am proud to be a Filipino.

Noypi ho ako, hindi Chek-in.

Sharwin L. Tee, 25, coaches his old high school's varsity bowling team.

IN THE NEWS



Sen. Jamby Madrigal

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In defense of lawyers

I READ with much interest the editorial on the state of the judicial system in the Philippines. (PDI, 1/28/05) For the INQUIRER to say that judges and lawyers "violate the underworld rule of honor among thieves, and may yet shame the professional criminals" and "the ultimate Mafioso does not come in pompous suit and cigar, but in judicial robes" is presenting a very strong and unequivocal indictment of the legal profession.

I appreciate the INQUIRER's earnest crusade to expose the ills of the justice system. Corruption indeed exists, but to generalize to such an extent is erroneous and unfair. The recognition that there is a problem is the first step in the long and difficult process of solving the ills of the judiciary. The situation is not as grim and hopeless as your editorial paints it to be because important reforms are being made. The effects of these reforms may not be immediately felt because of the magnitude of the problem, but they are being instituted.

For one, in the past two Congresses, there have been deliberate efforts to pass measures that increase the compensation of our justices, judges and prosecutors. The increase in the pay of our magistrates is now actually law, together with the measure hiking the allowance of our prosecutors. We were also able to successfully pass the Alternative Dispute Resolution law, which effectively hastens the resolution of commercial disputes. These measures are steps toward reforming the judiciary. Of course, the Supreme Court is likewise cracking the whip on erring judges more often, sending the signal that ignorance of the law and corruption will not go unpunished.

It's easy for the cynical to criticize and belittle these measures as palliative, but these efforts are precisely the concrete measures being made to partly address the situation in our legal system. They are far from being "weak-kneed" responses.

I'm strongly inclined to agree with the findings of the Social Weather Stations that there is still an idealism in the legal profession that we could harness and draw on. This idealism is what we need, and this is what will fuel our efforts at reform. Otherwise, we'll just give in to the temptation of ranting endlessly without giving specific solutions, adding to the problem instead of solving it.

—SEN. FRANCIS PANGILINAN,
Senate of the Philippines,
Rm. 603 GSIS Financial Center,
Roxas Blvd., Pasay City

In the name of political alliances

THIS is in reaction to the Jan. 3 editorial of the INQUIRER. If the past three years and six months of President Macapagal-Arroyo's doubtful presidency is any indication, then we're in for more trouble. The doubts about the legitimacy of her presidency will continue to hound her like a bad karma. Given this shaky foundation of her administration, how could we hope to see her risk urgent and radical reforms? She knows she does not have the political capital to bank on because of the perception—right or wrong—that she stole the presidency.

Politics is about perception. In realpolitik, perception is king. And as far as perceptions go, she is an illegitimate President, a product of vicious political trickery (besides being related to one Jose Pidal). In fact, that she won at all is a huge, huge mystery.

So all she would be focused on in the next months (or years, assuming she could hold on that long) would be on how to stay in power and please people in the media.

Ever wonder why she readily backed down in her confrontation with the telecom executives and with Chavit Singson? By the way, what has this "hero" of Edsa 2 got to say about the graft and corruption he accused the Arroyo administration of? More infuriating, how the President herself scrambled to appease him and how he was immediately absolved from his association to an establishment in Ilocos Sur that the police raided. *Akala ko ba malinis ang gobyernong ito at walang itinatago? Bakit kay* Chavit *lang* nanginginig na sa nerbyos (I thought that this government has nothing to hide? Why, just with Chavit, it already trembles in fear)? Strong Republic? That's supremely funny. Except that it hurts.

Edsa 1 and Edsa 2? What are we seeing now but another set of more rapacious hypocrites, greedier vultures who manage to picture themselves holier and better than the previous administration? *Sana man lang ay mas* competent (Would that they were just more competent). But it is so sad to see supposedly idealistic crusaders become exactly (or even worse than) the kind of people they denounced to high heavens in earlier times. It is so sad to see that irregularities committed by people in their circle can after all be ignored or covered up; that their principles can after all be sacrificed in the name of friendship and political alliances.

—ERIC FERNANNDEZ,
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LETTERS

Prioritize bill for 'lolas'

I BELONG to a network of individuals supporting the Filipino comfort women's demands for justice. In our own little way, (most of us are from the youth especially students), we tell the "*lolas*," as we call them, that the fight for justice for the victims of sexual slavery by the Japanese army during World War II is also a fight on behalf of the present generation for a peaceful and safe world, especially in these times of war and terrorism.

I have seen how the ranks of Lila-Pilipina-Gabriela, an organization of comfort women, have dwindled, as the *lolas* die one by one due to old age and illnesses. For the last three years, no less than 10 *lolas* have passed away, though hopeful to the end that their families would continue their struggle for justice, which began in 1992.

The news that the bill on the compensation for comfort women is now moving toward passage in Congress gives us, the Filipino comfort women and the Filipino youth, a reason for hope. Thus, I express my sincerest appreciation to our representatives who are taking the initiative to get the bill passed. We, the youth, commend and support their endeavors. But we urge our congressmen to act on the bill with greater urgency; our *lolas* are running out of time. What greater comfort could there be for a victim than seeing justice realized while she is still alive?

—CELIT IMASA,
Friends of the Lolas,
celit_9@yahoo.com

War on terrorism turning into religious persecution

THE WAR on terror continues to exact a heavy toll on our fellow Muslim brothers and sisters. It is they who have been hardest hit by the government's obsession to weed out and neutralize alleged "terrorists" from our midst.

To date, more than 800 Muslims are languishing in the Bicutan jail. Their crime is that they have been linked to the Abu Sayyaf, either as members or as sympathizers.

Ustadz Yacub Basug, a teacher of Arabic at the madrasa school in Palawan, was arrested on Nov. 23, 2003 at the Puerto Princesa Public Market without any warrant. Brothers Arman and Jhan Amiruddin, both minors at the time of their arrest, and Khalid Mapandi, were arrested without warrant at the Cotabato City Plaza on May 7, 2002. All have been charged with the Fitmart bombing in General Santos. Moklis Yunos, without benefit of counsel of choice, has been charged in connection with the Dec. 30, 2000 Rizal Day bombing.

It is no surprise that they are all Muslims as the war on terror has taken the tack of religious persecution. To this day, not one of the detainees has been convicted of any crime and yet their right against arbitrary arrest and detention has been blatantly violated and their right against torture disregarded. All of them were subjected to torture to make them confess their participation in the crimes alleged.

We urge the Arroyo administration and its law enforcers to exercise sound judgment and prudence in their pursuit of alleged "terrorists." This war on terror has, in fact, terrorized our Muslim communities. This will only fan more hatred and suspicion among our fellow Muslim brothers and sisters.

—E.C. AMISTAD,
deputy executive director for
operations-Luzon,
Task Force Detainees
of the Philippines,
45 St. Mary St., Cubao, QC

No magic in DOLE figures

WE wish to correct some points that Conrado Banal III raised in his Jan. 18 "Breaktime" column, particularly on the efforts of the Department of Labor and Employment relative to the country's unemployment problem and the plight of our overseas performing artists (OPAs).

Banal intimated that the DOLE resorted to a sort of "magic" in arriving at the official unemployment figure. We wish to make it clear there is no such thing as "magic" when we use the scientific way in computing the number of jobless Filipinos vis-à-vis the employed. We have standards, set by the National Statistics Office and the International Labor Organizations, in coming up with the actual number of unemployed.

It is basically the NSO, which does the Labor Force Survey. It is the same report that we release to the public—no more, no less.

With regard to the OPAs, the Philippine mission sent to Japan has recommended that we continue to make known the Philippine position on the issue, especially to sympathetic Japanese legislators.

We are fortunate that these Japanese officials support our position, especially on a transition period. While we are counting on these sympathetic legislators, our Philippine mission also plans to pursue the recognition of the experience of Filipino entertainers in Japan as compliance with the experience requirement for entertainers.

Also, we will challenge the notion of the Japanese Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force that most Filipino entertainers are now working in the "amusement and sex industry," and we will continue asserting their qualification as legitimate entertainers.

From our end, we will continue tightening the Artist Accreditation (AAC) system and other reform measures to restore confidence in the Philippines' effort to effectively protect our entertainment sector against trafficking. Remember that human trafficking was the root cause of the Japanese government's sudden decision to impose changes in its immigration policy.

This is clearly shown in the discrepancy in the number of Japanese visas issued in 2003, around 80,000 as against the 63,000 employment contracts processed by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration. We must admit that there is a need for closer coordination between the two countries in the war against trafficking.

While it is also true that the DOLE plans to send nurses and engineers there, in lieu of the shrinking labor market for OPAs, this will be experimental in nature. Systems will be developed based on initial experience, after which, professionals will be deployed in droves, including legitimate entertainers.

—JEFFREY CORTAZAR,
assistant secretary
for external affairs,
Department of Labor
and Employment,
6/F DOLE Bldg.,
Intramuros, Manila

Unwarranted media coverage

I WROTE this letter because I was upset by the "unwarranted" coverage by the media of the death and funeral of the late Fernando Poe Jr. Ronnie, as we fondly called him, would not have wanted it to be like this. Knowing how private a person he was, I am sure that he would have wanted his wake and funeral to be more somber, more dignified.

Speaking from experience since I did several pictures with him, I know that Ronnie was a very good man and immensely popular. He was a man who deserved all the accolades given to him. But the way media handled his death—come on. The poor people of Infanta, Real and General Nakar were all but forgotten. Why, I could not believe that even the INQUIRER devoted its entire front page to FPJ the day after he died! Television covered the wake and funeral ad nauseam.

So what happened to our poor "*kababayans*" in Quezon? No one cared for them while the media were feasting on the FPJ story. Ronnie was reported to have been sending relief goods without even a word that the relief goods were coming from him. I believe that because this was the kind of man he was. It's just too bad that media did him such a great dishonor.

—SUBAS HERRERO,
5 Fokker St.,
Filinvest 2, Batasan Hills,
Quezon City

It's now 2005

THIS is a rejoinder to the letter, titled "ATO acting on noise pollution," from Assistant Secretary Nilo Jatico of the Air Transportation Office. (PDI, 1/19/05)

It appears that residents of Merville Subdivision have been given some relief because takeoffs on Runway 13/31 will only be allowed for DC-9s, and B-737-200s with hush kits, while those without noise suppressors will use Runway 06/24. But what about residents of the AFP Officers' Village whose houses are adjacent to the upwind leg?

I remember sometime in 2002 on a TV program, the subject of noise pollution was discussed. The personalities who were on the program were Rep. Ed Zialcita of Parañaque City, Brig. Gen. Adelberto Yap (then ATO chief), Capt. Hernani Locson of Cebu Pacific and a representative of Air Philippines. The issue was the complaint of Merville Subdivision residents on the noise pollution coming from DC-9s operated by Cebu Pacific, and B-737-200s operated by Air Philippines.

When asked about the plans of his company about the problem, Locson emphatically replied that the DC-9s would be phased out by the end of 2004. Well, it is already 2005!

Aside from the DC-9s and B-737-200s, other airliners deviate upon takeoff from Runway 06 and fly directly over the houses.

We appreciate the fact that the ATO is acting on the problem. May we also request the ATO to caution airliners to maintain their heading on upwind leg; if possible, to deviate a few degrees to the right to avoid flying directly over our houses and instead fly over the Libingan ng mga Bayani where no one will be disturbed (no pun intended).

All citizens should be protected from the jarring and deafening noise of airplanes.

—RHONA HB HOTCHKISS,
De Los Reyes
cor. Aguinaldo Streets,
AFP Officers' Village,
Western Bicutan, Taguig City

Ang CONDONATION PROGRAM ng SSS!
Good news pare! Di ba may matagal ka nang utang sa SSS? May SSS Condonation Program na!
Talaga? Yan ba yung pwedeng magbayad ng utang sa SSS ng walang multa?
Oo pare. Espesyal na regalo ito ng SSS para sa mga miyembrong may salary, calamity, emergency, educational, study-now-pay-later plan, vocational/technical student o Y2k loans. Lahat ng member-borrowers na huli na sa pagbabayad as of September 30, 2004 ay kuwalipikado.
Aba, ok yan ah! Sinu-sino pa ang pwedeng sumali?
Depende sa contingency date, pwede ring makasali ang mga magpa-file ng retirement, death at total disability benefit claims.
Magandang balita nga yan, pare! Hanggang kelan ba maaaring mag-avail nito?
Sinimulan ito noong Oktubre 1, 2004 at tatagal hanggang Setyembre 30, 2005. Maaaring bayaran ang outstanding balance at interest ng buo o hulugan sa loob ng availment period. May chance ka pang sumali at manalo ng P5,000 sa ilalim ng Delinquency Assistance Program nila!
Salamat sa balita pare! Hindi ko talaga palalampasin ang pagkakataong ito!
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Editor **Jun Bandayrel**
Bureau Chief **Edralyn L. Benedicto**

Paying tribute to a Davide leader

By Jolene R. Bulambot
Cebu City

LOLO Undo sat quietly in his chair, holding back tears, as three generations of his family gathered around him.

For a son of a farmer who, by sheer hard work, became a public schoolteacher, Lolo Undo has gone a long way.

On Jan. 14, on his 100th birthday, he was not only honored for what he had achieved for himself but what he had achieved for his children.

It was not only a grand family affair but also a tribute befitting a man who has touched and inspired so many lives.

Lolo Undo is Hilario Davide Sr., father of Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. and six other equally successful offsprings. He is lolo dearest to 18 grandchildren and 29 great-grandchildren.

It was a day to celebrate as the Davide clan of Cebu gathered to honor their great grand old man of sterling qualities.

Born on Jan. 14, 1905 in Barangay Colawin, Argao, 67 km south of Cebu City, Lolo Undo is a paradigm of success both as a father and an educator.

His family, former colleagues and friends regarded him as a man who has built a Christian family of prayer and pious devotion.

Love, respect, humility, honesty and peace were the virtues he lived by as he struggled to survive and raise his family.

Testimonial of love

Lolo Undo is now reaping the harvest of almost a century of labor as hundreds came to celebrate with him and to pay tribute in what was described as a "testimonial of love" held at the celebrity ballroom of the Montebello Villa Hotel.

With the theme: "One Hundred Years of Life of Selfless Love and Service," the Davide clan offered a thanksgiving Mass for the great centenarian.

Married to Josefa Gelbolingo of Talaga, Argao on Dec. 28, 1925, the couple has seven children.

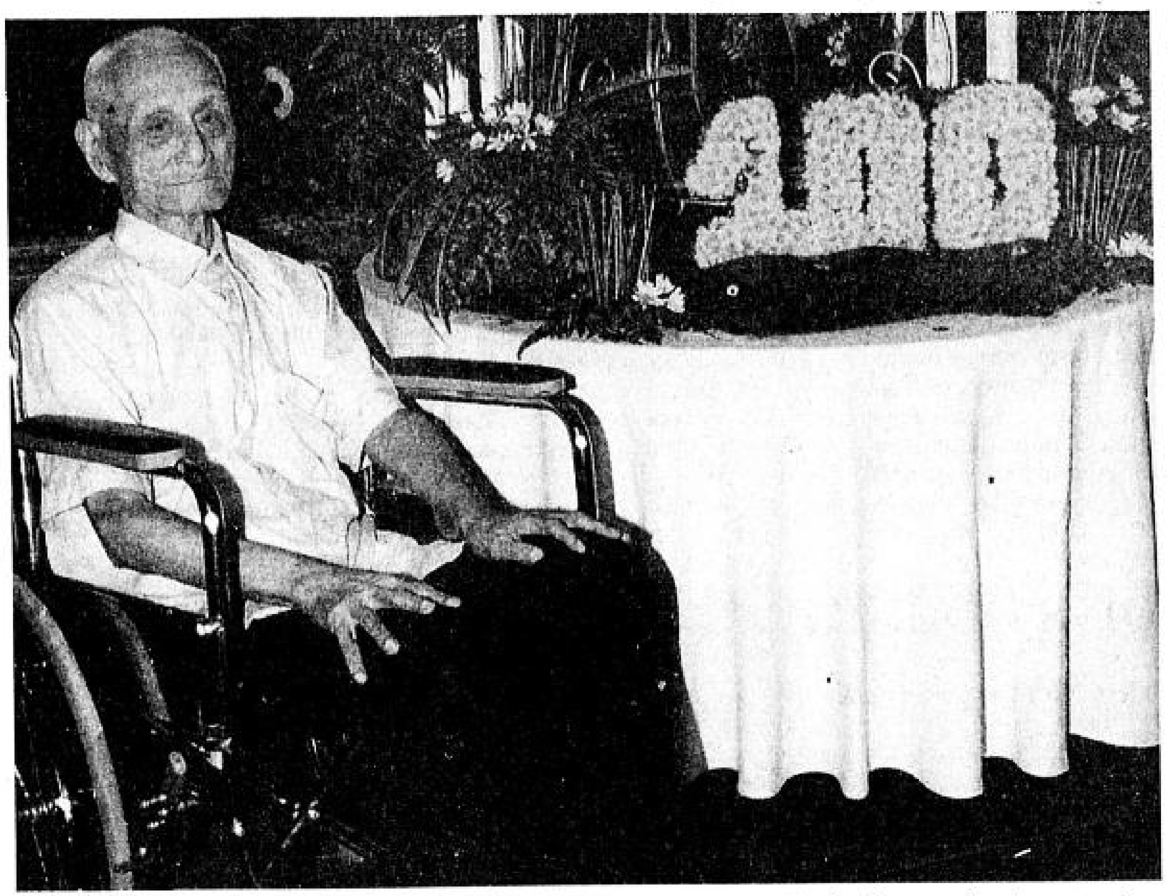
Aside from Hilario Jr., who has been recognized in 2001 by the Philippine Daily Inquirer as the Filipino of the Year, Lolo Undo and his late spouse also raised other successful children despite his meager income as a public schoolteacher.

They are Jose, a lawyer-engineer; Jorge, a doctor of soil; Ma. Paz Aragon, a retired teacher; Oscar, a retired doctor of medicine; Lina, a doctor of education and Romulo, a doctor of plant pathology.

As a dedicated father, Lolo Undo used to regularly set aside P1 for each of his children and placed the money in a hiding place in his matrimonial bed so he could finance their studies.

Born from a poor family in Barangay Colawin, Lolo Undo witnessed at a young age the hardship that his farmer-father Pablo and mother Teodora went through just to be able to raise 10 children.

But instead of having his spirit broken by his family's poverty, Lolo Undo thrived and secured an education for himself. With hard work, perseverance and determination, he became a teacher and taught during the pre-war era at the public school in Barangay Talaga of Argao, where he met and married Josefa, who was also a public schoolteacher.


LEADER of the Davide clan, Hilario Sr., receives accolades from the family that he so patiently nurtured and helped grow, during a tribute in honor of him on his 100th birthday.
PDI VISAYAS BUREAU

As a father, he was known to be strict, imposing discipline by assigning tasks to his children. The Davide siblings were not allowed to play when they were not done with their schoolwork.

Lolo Undo later became a public school principal, a district supervisor and later a school division superintendent before he retired in 1969.

Among his contributions included the building of an elementary school in Colawin. A three-story concrete building, known as the Colawin Library and Research Center, was a product of his efforts.

The example he set as family man earned for Lolo Undo the Bayaning Pamilyang Pilipino award given by the ABS-CBN Foundation in 1997. In the same year, he also became the recipient of the Outstanding Individual award given by the provincial government of Cebu.

Family first

Lawyer and Cebu City Councilor Hilario Davide III, one of Lolo Undo's grandchildren, told the INQUIRER that their grandfather would forever inspire them to stay modest and honest.

"We are all very happy he has reached this age. We have been inspired by the way he lived his life and the lessons he taught us especially about honesty and humility. We would be forever grateful to him," he said.

He said the Davide clan is very close. In fact, the family, particularly the grandchildren, maintains a website "Kamaus" (Kaming mga Apo ni Undo og Josefa) where they could reach out to each member.

"Family gathering is very important to him. We always gathered together because Lolo Undo wanted it that way that is why we are very close as a family," the younger Davide added.

He said the death of his Lola Epa in 1996 had caused so much grief and loneliness to Lolo Undo who had greatly loved and adored his wife.

Now frail, Lolo Undo is wheelchair-bound. He could hardly speak and hear but his eyes still have that glint that would show he knew exactly what was going on around him.

At many times during the grand reunion on Jan. 14, he would smile every time a song or a poem was rendered before him.

He turned teary-eyed as his children, grandchildren, relatives took turns embracing him while a toast was given in honor of him.

The held-back tears finally cascaded as a video presentation of birthday greetings from Lolo Undo's great-grandchildren, especially those who were outside the country, was shown.

Speaking on behalf of his father, Chief Justice Davide said it was his father's hope that he would still be around when he retires from the judiciary in December this year.

The chief justice said the love for family and service to others shown by his father would remain immortal, a legacy.

"I want to thank Papa and Mama for bringing us into this world, a family of love, unity, solidarity, respect to one another and success. Without them, you can't have a Hilario Jr., head of the Philippine Judiciary. Papa will always be remembered. He is a man who observed the value of giving. Love for him is never complete without giving," he said.

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Impose VAT on IPPs, local execs urge

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—The president of the League of Provinces in the Philippines (LPP) and the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (Ulap) has called for the lifting of the Value-Added Tax (VAT) exemptions being enjoyed by independent power producers (IPPs) and the professionals.

Bohol Gov. Erico Aumentado said the lifting of these exemptions could form part of a compromise agreement that the two chambers of Congress could come up with during the bicameral conference amid the concerns raised by various sectors that the two-percent increase in VAT would jack up prices of basic commodities.

He pointed out that the IPPs earn billions of pesos in revenues but the government does not get a single centavo from them.

He added that professionals like lawyers, doctors, architects and engineers earn a lot of money but are exempted from paying VAT.

The governor, however, stressed that in lifting the exemption, the lawmakers should draft a provision that would prevent the IPPs and the professionals from passing on the burden of payment to their clients.

"The two chambers in Congress must solve this problem. They must craft a provision that could minimize the possibility that the VAT implementation would be passed on to their clients," he said.

Aumentado said the LPP and the Ulap have endorsed and supported the tax measures being pushed by the Arroyo administration.

"Since from (sic) the start, we have been supportive of the proposed tax measures of the administration to solve the country's problem on (the) economy," the governor said.

Aumentado asked the public to understand the need to generate revenues through adjustment in taxes because the government needed to get additional revenues for its development projects.

But he said there must also be a calibration on the implementation of the VAT increase on selected items to cushion the impact of the tax adjustment on the poor.

"In the end, only the rich and the middle-income earners will be affected by the VAT increase," he said.

Aumentado said he was hopeful that the country would be able to solve its fiscal problems once Congress passes these eight tax measures.

Tanauan mayor's bodyguard tagged in killing of 2

TANAUAN CITY—The bodyguard of this city's mayor killed two people and injured one after he overheard a group of men exchanging jokes at a toilet and opened fire at them.

The killings took place Dec. 29, but efforts by officials to put a lid on them had brought silence.

Victims Fernando Malipol, 25, and Arman Sandoval, 28, residents of Barangay Ambulong in this city, were killed on the spot after Rene Dolog, one of Mayor Alfredo Corona's bodyguards, fired at them and another friend outside the toilet of the Modesta Castillo Hall in Barangay Uno.

The third victim, Florante Mendoza, also a resident of Ambulong, survived, but is in critical condition at the CP Reyes Hospital, also in Tanauan.

According to a witness, who requested anonymity, the mayor was attending a class reunion party at the Modesta Castillo Hall when at 11 a.m., Dolog, one of his bodyguards, fired at the three men outside the male toilet.

The toilet is just in front of the St. John Evangelist Church.

"The victims were exchanging jokes outside the comfort room when the gun-wielding Dolog came out and fired at them," the source said, "Dolog was probably irritated by the victims' jokes and chose to silence them with his gun."

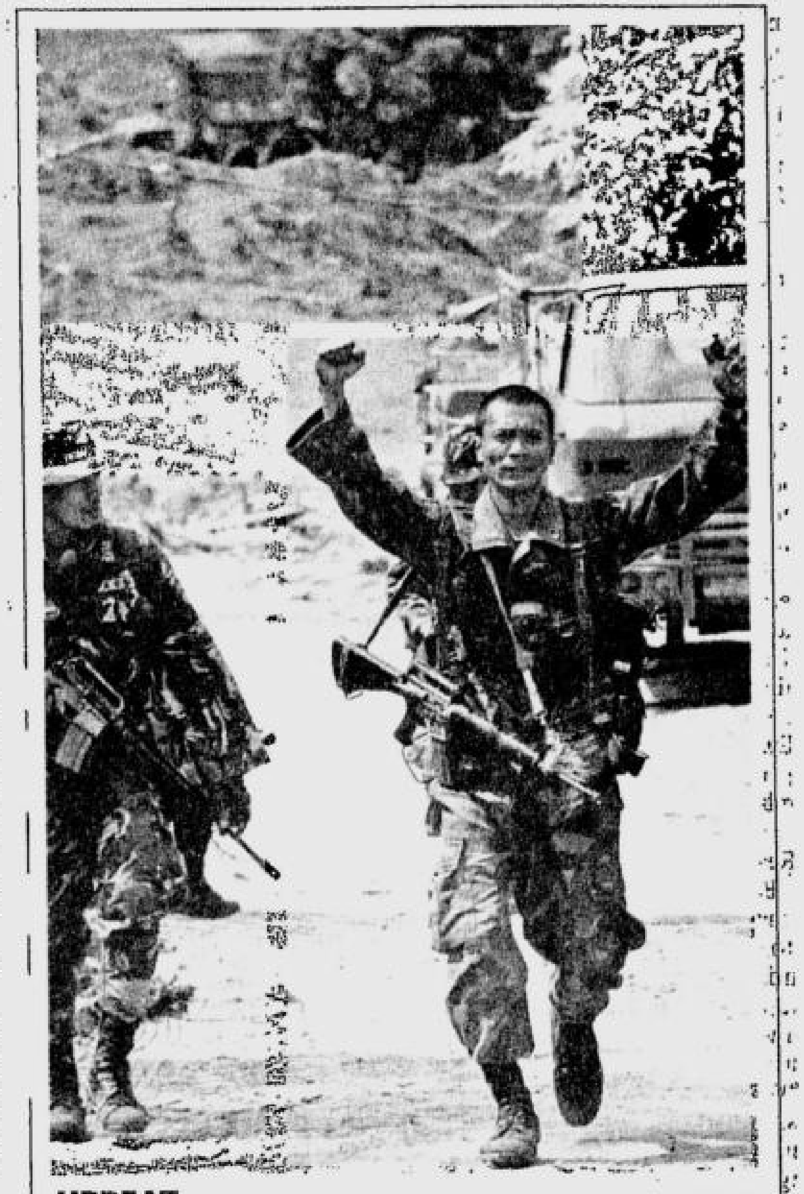
Tanauan police investigators recovered 25 bullet casings of a 9 mm pistol and six casings of bullets for a .45-cal. pistol in front of the comfort room.

But the Tanauan City police said the motive for the shooting was not known.

"There has been an information black-out in Tanauan since Dec. 29 because the mayor is a good friend of the city police chief, Supt. Renato Angara," the source said, "But they can't shut the mouth of all the people who saw the incident. Florante Mendoza survived. He recognized Dolog."

Corona admitted that Dolog was one of his bodyguards.

"The authorities are pointing at Dolog as the suspect, but I really don't know, because he hasn't reported to me since the incident," Corona said. *Mei Magsino-Lubis, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*



UPBEAT REUTERS
An Army soldier raises his hands as he and fellow soldiers patrol the Sierra Madre mountain range in Quezon province. Filipino and American soldiers are to begin war games in the province late this month.

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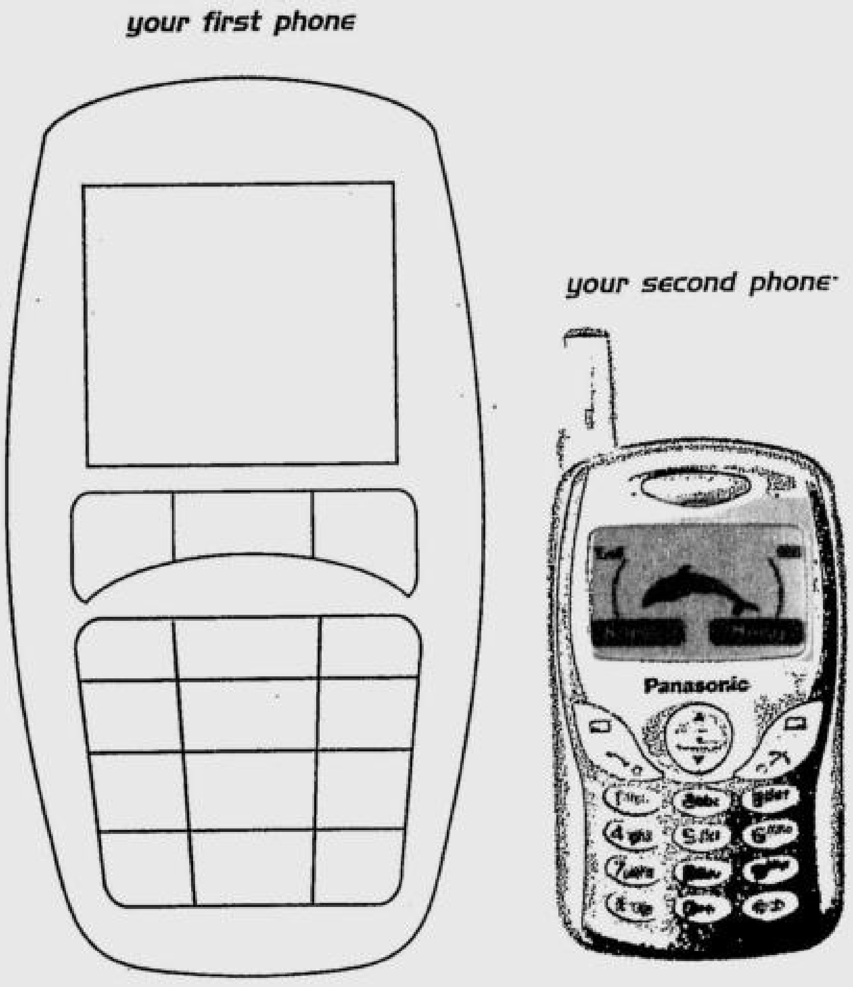

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Former NPA leader wounded in slay try

By Chito A. Fuentes
PDI Visayas Bureau

TAGBILARAN CITY—A former rebel leader who surfaced two years ago cheated death on Wednesday when still unidentified assailants left him for dead after firing at him in Barangay Cabacnitan, Batuan town in Bohol.

Epitacio Ramirez, better known as the legendary Commander Vargas, 63, was confined at the intensive care unit of the Gov. Celestino Gallares Memorial Hospital (GCGMH) here for treatment of bullet wounds in the left thigh, left elbow and chest.

His common-law wife Benita who was with him during the attack was also wounded below her left breast.

Ramirez, known widely under his *nom-de-guerre* Commander Vargas, led the New People's Army (NPA) provincial and regional commands in the mid-1980s until he dropped out of sight about two decades ago.

He surfaced on Dec. 2, 2002 when he was presented to the provincial peace and order council by Bohol Gov. Erico Aumentado who lured him out to help in the peace process.

SPO3 Gamaliel Merlas of the Batuan police station told the INQUIRER that at about 5:30 p.m., Ramirez and Benita were on their way home from the farm they are tilling in Sitio Tiosko, Barangay Cabacnitan when they were fired upon.

"We have not recovered any empty shell yet," Merlas replied in Cebuano when asked what firearm was used in the ambush.

He said Ramirez told him the gunfire appeared to have been from a Carbine.

Neighbors brought the wounded couple to Barangay Poblacion, Batuan by motorcycle, a distance of about seven kilometers.

An ambulance took them to the Congressman Simeon Toribio Memorial Hospital in Carmen town, about 8 km from Poblacion, Batuan.

The victims were taken to the GCGMH where they are confined. Physicians refused to allow any interviews, saying Ramirez was in guarded condition.

Merlas said Ramirez could not identify any of the suspects.

Batuan Mayor Sixto Dano said he did not believe the attack would have any effect on the town's peace and order situation, but did not elaborate.

He said Ramirez has been quietly tilling his farm, planting mango and mahogany trees.

DENR execs deny reporting illegal logging in Albay

LEGAZPI CITY—The Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (Penro) here in Albay denied submitting a report on illegal logging in the province.

Penro chief, lawyer Antonio Abawag, said he was baffled about the privilege speech made by Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago last Tuesday implying that several incumbent and former governors in the country, including Albay Gov. Fernando Gonzales, are not doing anything to stop illegal logging.

"I don't know where her information came from, but definitely not from our office. As far as we are concerned, we did not submit any report indicating that there are illegal logging activities in the province of Albay during the past year. Actually, most of the logs impounded by our office were intercepted from checkpoints which came from the Samar area and not actually coming from Albay," Abawag said.

He said some of the confiscated logs came from illegal cuttings in small volumes by individuals who own private lands.

He also defended Gonzales against any involvement in illegal logging and affirmed the absence of grand-scale illegal logging in the province.

"I am personally aware that Governor Gonzales is not in any way connected with the lumber industry," he said. *Jed LL Bacason and Leo Martin Ganace, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Group says new lease on casinos meant for aliens

BAGUIO CITY—A Christian coalition in Baguio launched on Thursday a new campaign to reverse the House measure extending the franchise of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor).

Lawyer Alexander Bangsoy, Bangon Pilipinas coordinator for Baguio, said House Bill 3409, sponsored by Baguio Rep. Mauricio Domogan, gives gaming entrepreneurs like Stanley Ho of Macau even bigger leeway in exploiting the gambling industry.

"It was tailor-made to accommodate the 'floating casinos' intended to be established by Macau gambling magnate Stanley Ho [because it allows gaming operations to operate] . . . 'on land or sea, within the territorial jurisdiction of the Republic of the Philippines,'" Bangsoy said in a press conference.

Evangelists are also introducing evidence that large scale gambling can destroy communities.

Rev. Donald Soriano, pastor of the Bethesda Ministries International and an orphanage administrator, said he received a confidential video evidence of murders and abuse in Northern Luzon where a casino has been operating.

"We are sending a medical mission [there] to assess the situation of the people who belong to our Church," Soriano said.

Domogan, chair of the House committee on franchising, announced in a press briefing here last week that HB 3409 had been approved on third and final reading after he inserted a provision granting local governments the right to refuse government gaming operations.

The extension guarantees the Arroyo administration a steady flow of funds, now that it is gripped by a budget deficit, he said.

Domogan said the anti-gambling coalition "missed the point" now that they were objecting to the Pagcor measure.

"This bill is [a simple process of] extending a franchise so [much of the provisions] they are challenging are already part of the original franchise. What I simply did was empower local governments because that is [the fruit of] my experience [in Baguio as a three-term mayor]," Domogan said.

Even the community being cited by Soriano will have the mandate to evict the casino because the franchise compels Pagcor to seek a new mandate from their most communities, Domogan said.

"Without [the insertion empowering local governments], all we will have is a lot of talk and debate but the bill will pass anyway," he said.

But Bangsoy said some officials railroaded the Pagcor bill through the House of Representatives, fully aware of a "moral objection" being campaigned by the Catholic Church and various evangelical ministries.

Simplicio Dang-awan, senior administrative pastor of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), criticized the government's reliance on gambling money to save, the economy.

"Do we have a proper tax collection [involving] big businesses in the country? Why not run after them instead?" Dang-awan asked. *Vincent Cabreza and Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

WASTE DRIVE

ALNOE PALER/CDN PHOTO

A scavenger pushes his cart full of retrieved plastic containers and other materials past the Ayala Center in Cebu City, hoping to cash in on his treasure at the end of the day. The items would be sold to a recycling shop in the city.

Co-op to LGU: Taxes or high power rates?

ROXAS CITY—An official of the Capiz Electric Cooperative (Capelco) yesterday warned they would have to raise power rates if the provincial government insisted in collecting taxes from Capelco.

Edgar Diaz, Capelco general manager, said the electric co-op has no choice but to pass on the payment of taxes to their consumers by raising the rates.

He also explained that the Capelco was not hiding behind the so-called "cooperative status" just to be exempted from paying taxes.

Diaz said they were just protecting their consumers who would have to suffer the brunt of higher power rates once the provincial government ordered the electric co-op to pay taxes.

The Capelco is the only electric cooperative that supplies the power needs of Roxas and the province's 16 towns.

The Capiz provincial board has lambasted Capelco because the electric co-op has not been paying taxes since it was established in 1971.

Board member Fernando Altobano said Capelco could not be exempted from paying taxes because it is not registered with the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA).

During a session last week, board member Jose Escolin presented to the provincial board an "Entry of Judgement" from the Supreme Court (SC) on a case filed by the Departments of Interior and Local Government and of Finance against the Philippine Rural Electric Cooperatives Association.

In the 24-page *en banc* decision promulgated on June 10, 2003, the High Tribunal allowed local government units to collect taxes from electric cooperatives.

Felipe Celino, PDI Visayas Bureau

Aussie envoy cited for her role in peace bid in South

DAVAO CITY—Outgoing Australian Ambassador to the Philippines Ruth Pearce was cited by the government for her firm support to peace and development in Mindanao and in the growth of the BIMP-Eaga.

Jesus Dureza, chair of the Mindanao Economic Development Council (Medco), cited Pearce's role in promoting economic relations and strengthening cultural and social understanding between the Philippines and Australia.

"Her inspiring personal leadership and vision has brought the level of her diplomatic duty to greater heights of deeper friendship and stronger bilateral relations between Mindanao and Australia," said Dureza in a testimonial of leadership to Pearce in Manila.

The Australian Embassy's official web site said Pearce is a senior career officer of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

She has served overseas as ambassador to the Russian Federation in 1999-2002; high commissioner to the Solomon Islands in 1992-1994; Australian delegate, UN Commission on Human Rights, Geneva and UN General Assembly's Third Committee in 1984-1988; second secretary in Tel Aviv in 1978-1982; and third secretary in Dhaka in 1974-1976.

Dureza also noted Pearce's vital role in the successful implementation of the Philippines-UN Multi-Donor Program Phase 3, a strategic undertaking between the Philippine government and the United Nations aimed at strengthening the foundations of lasting peace and sustainable development in Mindanao.

The partnership gave various development projects to former conflict areas in Mindanao benefiting members of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

Jeffrey Tupas, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Pangasinan City launches new agri scheme

AGRICULTURE experts show a cross-breed of goats to Mayor Hernani Braganza which would be used in Alaminos City's agriculture productivity programs. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

OFFICIALS in Alaminos City, Pangasinan are doing their best to help 10,000 rice and vegetable farmers become skilled entrepreneurs and managers through an innovative approach that they call the "Ocho-Ocho" program.

Alaminos City Mayor Hernani Braganza and City Agriculturist Ernesto de Leon, in coordination with other local officials, has introduced the new scheme to build up the confidence of farmers to become self-reliant.

Braganza said in a press statement that under the new scheme, small land holdings would be clustered into groups of eight hectares each.

Each cluster has a farmer-leader while a farm manager or coordinator is assigned to oversee three clusters.

Eight variations of crops such as rice, corn and higher value vegetables particularly those used for the province's favorite dish, the *pinakbet*, will be grown for the consumption of the city and for export.

The city government has allocated an initial budget of P30 million to implement the program this year.

Braganza said he aims to pour in P200 million to sustain the "Ocho-Ocho" program, including provisions for credit, guarantee fund, irrigation, post harvest and marketing investments and capability-building.

Clustering lessens the production cost, establishes the prices of agricultural produce in the market and draws order to bring about effective and efficient farm management to avoid waste of time, effort and money, said Braganza's statement.

Farmers have adopted entrepreneurial and managerial skills and new technologies to increase their production using high-value rice and other commercial crops.

The city government vows to deliver a strong partnership with the farmer-beneficiaries, markets, the Land Bank of the Philippines, Quedancor, seed companies and fertilizer suppliers.

Braganza, a former agrarian reform and press secretary, said he believes in working closely in a harmonious atmosphere to achieve positive results.

He said he wants to promote leadership among farmers.

"We believe in the capacity of farmers to institute reforms," Braganza said.

The city officials and other businessmen vowed to support the program, he said.

Dagupan City makes new bid to regain longest BBQ title

DAGUPAN CITY—It's "take two" for Dagupan to make a bid for the Guinness Book of Records for the longest barbecue after it has been dislodged by Turkey just months after the city was given a certificate by the world's keeper of records.

Dagupan seized the record from Peru (613 meters) by holding a 1,007 meter-long barbecue during the Bangus Festival on May 3, 2003. It was given a Guinness certificate in November 2003.

But it was dethroned by Turkey, which established a record of 1,600 meter-long barbecue during its Anchovy Festival on Dec. 22, 2002 but was given a Guinness certificate in January 2004. Mayor Benjamin Lim said the city will build a 2.2-km grill, or twice as long as that in 2003, so that "it will be difficult for other world record bidders to beat it."

Lim said Dagupeños are "proud of what they have achieved and . . . trying to regain the record for the longest barbecue is a challenge that we should work for together."

The Bangus Festival committee, headed by Councilor Michael Fernandez, is studying where the barbecue party will be held. In 2003, it was held in the downtown area of Dagupan.

Fernandez said the Kalutan ed Dagupan will be "twice as big a celebration" because the barbecue will be "twice as long." "We're now laying the foundation for the 'kalutan' . . . this early so (we will) have a longer time to prepare for the big event," he said.

This early, sponsors are giving their support for the festival that is tentatively set on April 28 to May 2.

Lim said the private sector, not the city government, would finance the festival. *Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Pag bumenta ba, da best na?
Probably. But then critics at the CAR OF THE YEAR beg to differ
CAR of the YEAR
AAP

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The NBI agent who bragged of ties to FVR

From page A1

Ramos. He is a 1981 graduate of the Philippine Military Academy, and is now with the private sector.

'Malakas talaga'

But the INQUIRER source said Soriano gave the impression that he had "strong connections" with other powerful people, and not only with the Ramoses: *"Malakas talaga siya."*

The source said Soriano also bragged about his "closeness" to then Justice Secretary Teofisto Guingona, and was even supposedly seen taking a nap on the latter's sofa.

Eventually, Soriano found a staunch patron in then NBI chief Santiago Toledo, who allowed him to operate "even without NBI organic personnel with him," the source said.

Except for NBI investigator Leo Palencia, Soriano's team was practically composed of "outsiders" whom Toledo assigned as "confidential agents" for the sake of "giving them personality," the source said.

This would explain why most of Soriano's operations were botched, and the suspects eventually released. "And that's because they worked even without warrants," the source said.

SORIANO in his heyday (at left) gave the impression that he was *that* close to the powers-that-be that he could sleep on the couch of then Justice Secretary Teofisto Guingona. (Right) Finally in custody in Camp Crame where he was presented to the media on Thursday. PDI PHOTO

Greed

Soriano created enemies mainly because of greed and ambition, the source said, recounting the following case:

Sometime in 1997, Soriano and Palencia "arrested" another agent, Dong Calleja, for alleged possession of shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride).

But fellow investigators checked out the case, and found that Calleja was "planted" with shabu confiscated from Soriano's previous operation.

Calleja "fought" his case, and the NBI agents were divided between those siding with him and with Soriano's group.

"That caused a rift within the bureau," the source said. "The corps of investigators even planned to ambush Martin inside the NBI."

The source said Soriano was also linked to the killing of agent Mike Sablada inside the NBI office.

"Sablada had discovered something about Soriano," the source said, adding that while it was true that Sablada was shot by another agent, there were indications that Soriano was behind the killing.

Car theft

Details on Soriano's personal circumstances are spotty at best.

The INQUIRER source said he first knew of Soriano in 1995, after they arrested him for car theft.

Soriano was also linked to illegal drugs, "but he made his fortune in stealing cars, especially luxury vehicles," the source said, adding:

"We don't know what happened next, but he found his way inside the NBI."

Within months, Soriano would become a "confidential agent," or what is commonly known as an "informant."

Soon, Toledo would promote him to "intelligence agent," a title that actually means "glorified clerk," the source said.

He said Soriano did not undergo the required NBI training for investigative work, was not a lawyer, and did not present credentials such as civil service eligibility.

Good leads

But in the beginning, Soriano gave the NBI "good leads." Then, the source said, they noticed that "he was making money from the operations, so we backed out." That was the time when Soriano began reporting directly to Toledo, the source said.

"We knew his style—*tanim-tubos*. They plant the evidence, then ask the victim to cough up money. That's what he did to Guillen," the source said, referring to Caroline Guillen, Soriano's most recent victim. *(See story on Page A1.)*

Toledo died in 1999. His successor as NBI chief, Federico Opinion, dismissed Soriano that same year on the basis of the numerous complaints filed against him.

Opinion died in 2000.

7 cops being . . .

From page A1

of the seven police officers' standard operating procedure was "hulidap," a scheme wherein suspects are arrested for the purpose of extortion.

"This is what's destroying the good image of the Philippine National Police," he said.

Premature

But PNP intelligence director Robert Delfin, chief investigator of Soriano's illegal operations, said it was premature to accuse the seven officers of involvement in the ex-agent's syndicate.

Delfin said his unit, the Police Anti-Crime Emergency Response (Pacer), was still waiting for at least four people to file a formal complaint against the officers.

No formal complaint

He said the four visited his office on Thursday and were to return yesterday to do the paper work.

During the Thursday visit, two of the complainants, an elderly couple, claimed that Soriano and his group once robbed them of P1.5 million in cash as soon as they stepped out of a bank, Delfin said.

He said the other complainants spoke of "several men in police uniform" who were part of the syndicate.

"[But] until they file a formal complaint, the things they said will simply be hearsay and will have no bearing on the case," Delfin told the INQUIRER.

Soriano was arrested in Quezon City on Jan. 31, after years of being implicated in various cases involving illegal drugs and kidnapping.

His elusiveness has generated suspicion that ranking police officials were involved in his operations and were protecting him.

Soriano was nabbed along with two other men.

Three days earlier, the group "arrested" 23-year-old Caroline Guillen for alleged possession of illegal drugs.

Guillen was allegedly detained at a Makati hotel and released only after Soriano's group received a negotiated ransom of $1,600 cash and an Isuzu Crosswind XUV.

US general . . .

From page A1

right upfront with you, I like brawling."

He added, "You go into Afghanistan, you got guys who slap women around for five years because they didn't wear a veil." Mattis continued: "You know, guys like that ain't got no manhood left anyway. So it's a hell of a lot of fun to shoot them."

War's harsh realities

On Thursday, Gen. Michael W. Hagee, commandant of the Marine Corps, issued a statement saying, "I have counseled him concerning his remarks, and he agrees he should have chosen his words more carefully." Hagee added, "While I understand that some people may take issue with the comments made by him, I also know he intended to reflect the unfortunate and harsh realities of war."

Mattis is currently the commanding officer of the Marine Corps Combat Development Command in Quantico, Va., which is responsible for developing Marine war-fighting doctrine, techniques and tactics.

As commander of the 1st Marine Division in the Iraq war less than two years later, Mattis ordered his force on a high-speed race from Kuwait to Baghdad, sowing confusion among Iraqi units along the way with the fast-paced maneuver warfare.

Gen. Peter Pace, a Marine officer who is the vice chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said at the same briefing he would let Mattis speak for himself. *New York Times News Service*

Sex, social activities . . .

From page A1

go to parties, relate with friends and have sex are less prone to developing Alzheimer's disease, a form of dementia that afflicts the aged.

Ma. Socorro Martinez, head of the Memory Center of the St. Luke's Medical Center, said the study done in Sweden showed that socialization reduced the risk of Alzheimer's disease by 30 percent.

"Those who don't have a spouse tend to have Alzheimer's disease because they have nobody to talk with," Martinez said in a health forum.

Heart disease, too

"Those who have sexual partners are also at a lower risk," she said.

Sex has also been proven to reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases (CVD), which—along with hypertension and a sedentary lifestyle—increases the risk of one having dementia or memory loss.

Millions afflicted worldwide

There were 90,000 Filipinos suspected to have Alzheimer's as of 2000.

Those at risk for Alzheimer's disease in the Philippines would reach 14.3 million in 2030—the population of Filipinos aged 65.

Alzheimer's affects as many as 15 million people globally, including 4 million Americans.

Democratic

Said to be a democratic illness, it has taken people from all walks of life, including prominent ones: former US President Ronald Reagan, former British Prime Minister Harold Wilson, singer Perry Como and actress Rita Hayworth.

It is one of the most common consequences of growing old.

No remedy

Experts say there is no cure and little can be done at present to curb its destruction of victims' personalities, memories and skills.

No one knows exactly what causes Alzheimer's, although aging is the biggest known risk factor.

The disease begins in parts of the brain that regulate memory and thinking skills, but eventually it spreads to other areas.

Reading books won't help

Martinez said elderly Filipinos should not only avoid a sedentary lifestyle but also communicate and socialize more with others.

"Socialization involves an exchange of information. It is a coping mechanism: you learn from the experience of others, which you cannot even if you read a hundred books on your own," she said.

Socialization would also counter the depressive tendencies of adults, which is one of the earliest signs of Alzheimer's, she said.

10 symptoms

The St. Luke's Memory Center identified 10 symptoms of Alzheimer's among adults:

- Memory loss
- Difficulty in performing familiar tasks
- Problems with language, such as groping for common words, such as having difficulty in expressing specifically what one wants
- Disorientation
- Poor or decreased judgment
- Problems with abstract thinking
- Misplacing things
- Changes in mood or behavior
- Changes in personality
- Loss of initiative

Over time, symptoms become more obvious. People may seem withdrawn in groups and lose the ability to do routine things, such as cook or play cards.

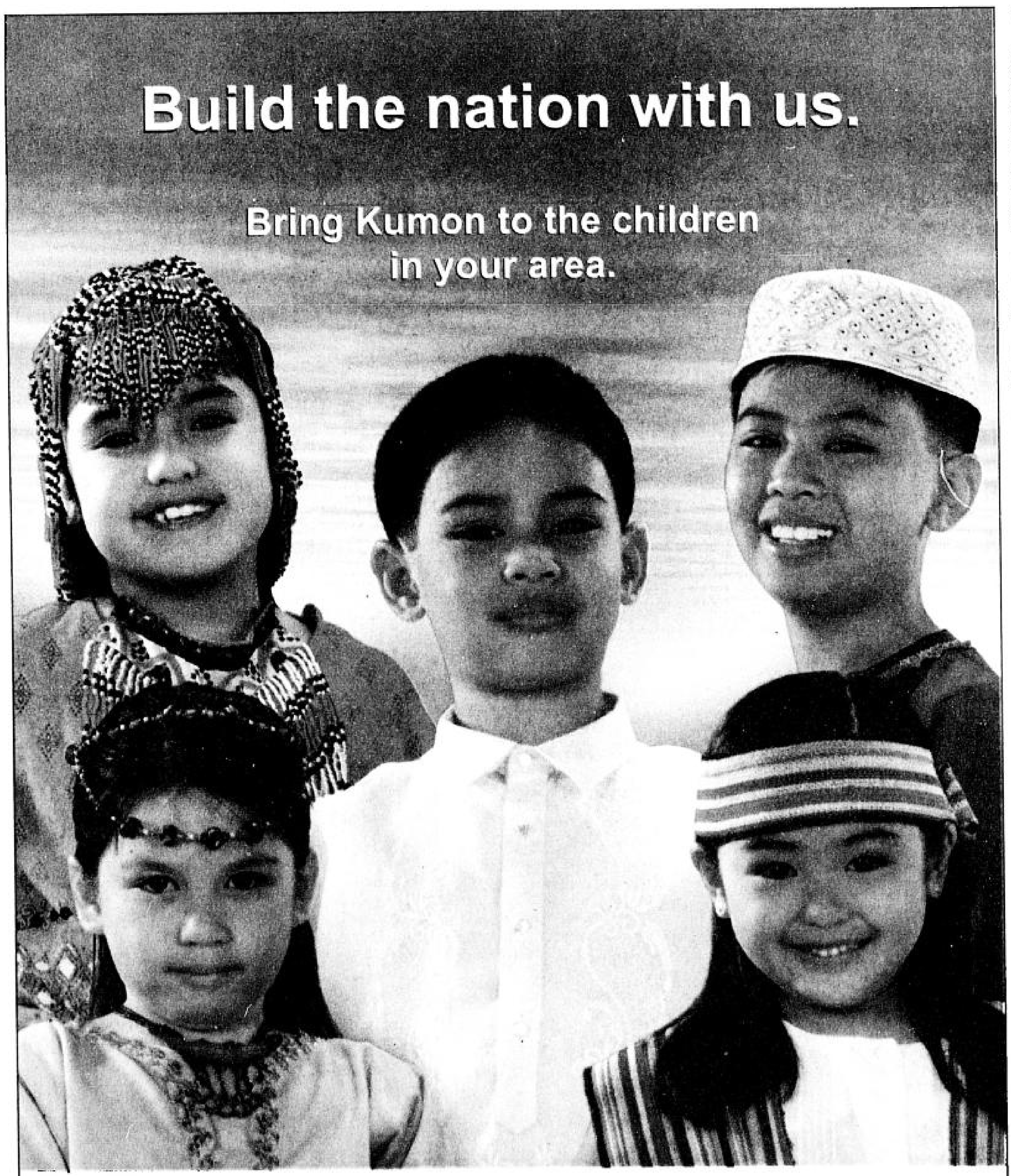
Patients lose their ability to find their way around or recognize loved ones. They may see things that do not exist.

Love helps

Martinez said the presence of family members would be a big help for persons with Alzheimer's.

"Human touch can trigger remembrance. Emotional attachment is always the last to go, so they (old people) should always be reassured of love," she said.

The disease is named after German physician Alois Alzheimer, who first described the condition in 1906. INQUIRER wires


Build the nation with us.
Bring Kumon to the children in your area.

We at Kumon strive to build the nation through education. With over 150 centers nationwide, we aim to contribute to Philippine society by bringing our unique self-motivated learning method to more and more children in every region. The Kumon Method equips them with the life skills needed to become capable and competent leaders in their community. With invaluable training in calculation and reading comprehension skills, coupled with the discipline of daily study, we aim to foster children with strong abilities. This mission is made possible by dedicated instructors who care for the children and work tirelessly to develop the boundless potential of these young minds.

If you want to do your part in building a strong Philippines, we invite you to learn more about the Kumon Method through a Free Franchise Orientation this February 8, 2005 from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm at the 19th floor Philamlife Tower, 8767 Paseo De Roxas, Makati City. For seat reservations, please call 885-0226.

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KUMON

THE TRUTH AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH.

To Our Valued Planholders and Stakeholders :

So much negative media has been written and broadcast about College Assurance Plan (CAP). **Some misguided and unscrupulous elements have been quick to claim CAP is insolvent and should be closed. Many of you have been grossly misled by this deadly, unrelenting and well-orchestrated attack on CAP.**

College Assurance Plan (CAP) made college education affordable for thousands of Filipinos. You trusted it before, you can still trust it today.

CAP sent its first scholar to college in 1985. Today, 84,490 scholars have graduated from college, 90,230 are presently enrolled in various colleges and universities and a total of 174,720 planholders are being served by CAP.

The CAP Traditional Pre-Need Plan was conceived in 1980 to provide parents with an inflation-free savings vehicle that guarantees payment to the school of tuition fees due when the beneficiary of the plan enters college. Since then, **CAP has paid out a total of 11.3 Billion Pesos in benefits (tuition fees, cash values, etc.) to beneficiaries of its plans.**

CAP has been and always will be a respectable company. As testimony to its stature, it has garnered awards and recognition which include :

- Most Outstanding Pre-need Company
- No.1 In Pre-need Education
- Ranked 227 Of The Top 1000 Corporations
- Hall Of Fame – Consumers Union Of The Philippines
- Model Taxpayer – Bureau Of Internal Revenue
- Super Brand In Asia – Readers Digest

If so, you, our valued clients would perhaps ask… what happened? For a fair, honest and complete picture, here's what really happened…

Every year, an actuary does valuation work to predict a reserve liability at some point in time in the future when the pre-need plans sold will mature. It can go as far as 30 years in the future depending on the age of the beneficiary. Benefit payments are anticipated long before they occur, taking into account the inflation rate at the time the plan was purchased up to its maturity, no matter the cost.

In pre-need plans, the ARL is a prediction of contingent (future) liability. This ARL future prediction is matched against another future prediction - the company's trust fund asset growth.

Based on SEC rules, the **Actuarial Reserve Liability (ARL) or prediction of future liability is made to appear as an actual liability in CAP's financial** statements during the year 2003.

How can a prediction of future or contingent liability be declared as actual liability when in truth, no such actual liability occurred?

When this happened, some bureaucrats were overly eager to declare CAP insolvent. The inclusion of the questionable ARL, based on empirical data, has been 42% off in the last 3 years and makes the whole valuation process erroneous.

Is it true what the Media and SEC say about CAP being insolvent?

NO! **CAP is not insolvent.** In fact, CAP had retained earnings of 7.0 Billion Pesos in 2003 and not a loss as bruited about by some sectors. If CAP is insolvent on paper, this is only because of :

1. Inclusion of ARL on the financial statements.
2. The questionable ARL which was made to appear by SEC as an actual liability has been, by empirical data, off by about 42% in the last 3 years.

If so, does CAP have the means to actually pay its planholders?

Yes. In spite of the difficulties.

CAP assures its valued planholders that it has the necessary assets and trust fund that can meet its long-term obligations of paying CAP scholars' tuition fees. These assets, together with all other pertinent documents, were already submitted to the SEC as part of the justification for the issuance of a new permit to sell.

Here's what CAP has already done to remedy the situation : **in January 24, 2005, CAP increased its capitalization from 300 Million Pesos to 8.0 Billion Pesos.** If it was able to pay for over 84,490 in scholars' benefits with a 300 Million capitalization, just think of what 8.0 Billion in capitalization can achieve.

Last January 24, 2005, CAP inked a $300 Million loan with First American Investment and Philippine Veterans Bank. The proceeds of this loan will go to paying planholder benefits.

In a recent newspaper article, SEC demanded to see the color of our money. Obviously, financial advisers will tell you that it's a chicken-or-egg situation where the influx of new capital won't happen if the SEC won't approve the memo of agreement and loan agreement that we presented as a workable solution.

The CAP trust fund portfolio as of December 31, 2004 is as follows :

Stocks (with BOC, ABC and MBTC)	P2,251,529,179.00
Real Estate (with BOC, ABC and PVB)	2,741,109,370.00
Fixed Income (with ABC, MBTC, EBC, PVB and EWB)	409,562,404.00
MRT Bonds (with BOC, EWB and PVB)	3,322,456,171.00
TOTAL	P8,724,657,124.00

It's true that CAP's cash flow has been somewhat affected by all the negative publicity as well as the absence of a Dealer's License and/or permit to sell which has caused collections to fall from 4.5 Million Pesos daily to less than 1.0 Million. This liquidity problem is temporary, and if need be, may be readily addressed by the sale of some of its MRT bonds. But because of this present environment where "vulture funds" are lying in wait, selling the bonds would be at a loss. These MRT bonds however, are backed up by the sovereign guarantee of the Republic of the Philippines and have a present day value of 3.0 Billion Pesos and a face value on maturity of 10.0 Billion Pesos.

CAP reassures its planholders it will not renege on its obligations.

First of all, CAP continues to meet its obligations and commitments to its planholders. In fact, during the First Semester of School Year 2004-2005, CAP fully paid 1.2 Billion Pesos in benefits. Of the 1.2 Billion Pesos in benefits due in the second semester, 425 Million Pesos were already settled.

If a school will not accept a CAP check as tuition fee payment, CAP can and will reissue the check in the planholder's or beneficiary's name.

We need you, our valued planholder, to understand this temporary problem and stand by us during these trying times as we remedy the situation. You are the heart and soul of CAP.

CAP also suffered from a double-whammy of spiraling tuition fees and dwindling yield rates on its trust fund assets. It could have taken the easy way out : tell planholders that it intended to pay no more than a 15% annual increase on tuition and other school fees (after all, that was the prevailing government ruling when they bought the plans). But, CAP decided to stick to its commitment to pay whatever the tuition fees would cost. This gesture of goodwill demonstrates the sincerity of CAP in wanting to stick to its commitment to planholders.

Some vested interests are maliciously misleading you and grossly painting a negative picture of CAP.

These unscrupulous persons are determined to bring down CAP's reputation and business leadership by advising planholders who aren't fully paid-up yet, to discontinue paying their plans or those who have fully paid-up, to surrender their plans.

Dear valued Planholders, do not be blinded by these wrong advisories. At the end of the day, if you follow them, you will all end up being victims of these misguided and misinformed elements and we both end up as losers.

Once a planholder stops paying a plan, it will make the plans lapse and therefore, it will no longer have any force and effect. This will also mean total loss of protection or limit the benefits due to the plan's termination value.

If you opt to surrender your plans, you would get only a percentage of your expected future benefit and in effect, even make it harder for both of us to solve this temporary problem.

College Assurance Plan's Vision and Mission – Helping Filipino Families cope with the spiraling cost of education.

CAP continues to believe in helping make the cost of quality education a reachable dream for every Filipino. In 25 years, we have faithfully served thousands of Filipino families with honor and distinction. Why some misguided elements would stop at nothing to bring this institution down… is beyond us. Together, let our voices be heard as we tell them… THEY CAN NEVER STOP A GOOD THING !

With faith in GOD, and with your steadfast and wholehearted support we shall overcome.

For further clarifications or inquiries, please visit or call :

CAP

CAP I Building
126 Amorsolo cor. Herrera Streets, Legazpi Village, Makati City
Ph: 817-6586; 759-2000 Fax: (0632) 818-0560

Another lawmaker warns of 'pork revolt'

By Carlito Pablo

THE PINCH in pork barrel funds may spark a revolt in the Lower House, pro-administration Rep. Robert Ace said yesterday.

Barbers (Lakas, Surigao del Norte) and Rep. Douglas Cagas (NPC, Davao del Sur) said lawmakers were griping about delays in the release of their pork barrel allocations not only for 2005 but also for some projects for 2003 and 2004.

"What's happening is that congressmen keep on supporting the administration's legislative agenda, especially new taxes, but they're not getting any support in exchange for projects in their districts," Barbers said.

"This griping could snowball and if this is not immediately addressed, we might witness a pork revolt in the House," Barbers said.

Favoritism alleged

"There are speculations in fact of favoritism in the release of funds," he added.

Barbers did not say what form the "revolt", if it occurred, at all, might take.

He said congressmen were being badgered by their constituents, who rely mostly on the Priority Development Assistance Fund and public works fund—collectively known as "pork barrel"—for projects in their congressional districts.

"The pork barrel projects are the only manifestation of our public service to our constituents. Our people are the ones demanding for it," Barbers said in an interview.

Scholarships affected

Barbers said that in his case, some of his 2004 projects hadn't been fully funded by the government.

In the cases of some other legislators, the backlog is 50 percent of financing costs, he said.

Cagas said he hadn't been able to secure a notice of cash allocation (NCA) for his scholarship programs for 2003.

For 2004, Cagas said 40 percent of his projects had not been given NCAs.

"Construction of some school buildings in my area has stopped," Cagas said.

Cagas claimed that a number of lawmakers were having difficulties in securing funding for their projects because they were not the favored ones.

'Not a Palace tool'

"There are some who are favorites, be they with the administration or opposition," Cagas said.

"We hope that by Monday, we will receive some NCAs for pending projects in 2004," he said.

House Majority Leader Rep. Prospero Nograles (Lakas, Davao City) said the pork barrel fund was an "automatic entitlement for every congressman and senator."

Nograles, in a statement, said it was "not accurate (for Cagas) to claim that this can be used by Malacañang as an instrument to force Congress to pass administration measures."

16-M ILLITERATES

DepEd seeks help in fight vs illiteracy

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan and Michael Lim Ubac

ADULT illiteracy in the country is expected to worsen owing to unabated poverty, an official of the Department of Education said yesterday.

The department said 16.28 million Filipinos mostly adults could not read or write, or if they could read, they could not comprehend.

This means about 20 percent of the total population are illiterate.

Carolina Guerrero, head of the DepEd's Bureau of Alternative Learning Systems (BALS), said the departgment had not been able to do much to crack the problem.

"This is the challenge we face. There's a big population that needs to be helped. It's 20 percent now but we're still expecting it to go up," Guerrero told local government officials.

She did not say by how much, but she said there would be more Filipinos who would not be able to afford school as long as there was mass poverty.

The DepEd appealed for help from local government executives to augment its non-formal education work.

Guerrero said her bureau simply did not have enough funds and manpower to reach out to as many people as possible.

The bureau said 16.28 million Filipinos could be classified as either "basically illiterate" or "functionally illiterate."

Priorities

The basically illiterate are those who could not read or write, having never gone to a formal school.

The functionally illiterate are the school dropouts who have eventually lost their comprehension skills.

Guerrero said her bureau's first priority was the 10.5 million adults from the ages of 16 to 77 who were considered illiterate.

The secondary priority is the 1.8 million kids ages 6 to 11 and the 3.9 million teenagers ages 12 to 15 who could not afford to go to school.

BALS has only 600 "mobile public school teachers" who seek out their "students" in far-flung and depressed communities.

Last year, BALS reported that its teachers were able to help 26,500 Filipinos become literate and 30,000 more to become functionally literate.

Fund shortages

Guerrero said there were nearly as many Filipinos in need of non-formal education as there were students in the formal education set-up.

With about 18 million students in public schools, the DepEd suffers from chronic resource shortages.

As a result, BALS does not get much funding.

Of the DepEd's total P112 billion funds, only .068 percent or P70 million is set aside for nonformal education work.

Education Secretary Florencio Abad yesterday signed a memorandum of understanding with the heads of the leagues of provinces, cities, municipalities, barangay and the Sangguniang Kabataan National Federation to promote more literacy programs outside of schools.

Boost from the Senate

Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan supported an increase in the DepEd budget.

"The quality of the public basic education system has been far from desired because government spending has not kept pace with the rapid increase of student enrollment," he said.

Pangilinan said that in 2004, the government spent only P10 per elementary pupil and P35 per secondary student on a monthly basis.

"It is no wonder that overall learning achievement of pupils has been declining. This deterioration has been reiterated by the results of the High School Readiness Test (HSRT) in June 2004 where the majority of incoming 1st year high school students got an overall mean percent score of 32.13," Pangilinan said.

Growing population

He said public school enrollment consistently expanded, particularly at the secondary level—from 4.562 million students in school year 2001-2002 to a projected 5.482 million students in 2005-2006.

In terms of budgets, he said, the DepED budgets for the period grew at 4.5 percent annually.

However, Pangilinan said, the department's budgets were not enough to cope with inflation, which averaged 4.5 percent annually and an enrollment growth, which averaged 2.6 percent annually.

Pangilinan said that 89 percent of the budget was allotted to salaries and other personnel benefits.

Malnourished children

"The DepEd budget is among the very few that got an increase. This is because we see the seriousness of the malnutrition of our school-going children," he said.

"The budget that the DepEd is asking for this year is P112.04 million. We are earmarking P300 million for the feeding program with the hope that the quality of education of our children will also improve."

Pangilinan said studies showing that Filipino students were getting poor exam results were "alarming."

He attributed failing marks and low rankings of Filipino students compared to children in other countries to the "hungry and malnourished" state of many grade schoolers and high school students.

Empty stomachs

"How can they concentrate on their studies when their stomachs are empty?" he asked.

Senate finance committee chair Manuel Villar believed that the shortage of teachers, classrooms, desks and books could already be considered a crisis.

DepEd data showed that the shortage was because "enrollment in public schools grows faster than the population."

Over 275,000 students were added every year in the elementary and high school levels, he said. Thus, at least 10,000 teachers were needed for this year.

RP in no hurry to rejoin US-led coalition

From page A1

ing the terrorists in our own homefront which has been recognized as very successful by the whole world and that is why we are the chairman of the antiterrorism task force of the Apec (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum)," the President said.

The Philippine withdrawal from Iraq strained relations with the United States, but Ms Arroyo and Bush patched things up at the Apec summit in Chile late last year.

RP's best interest

Ms Arroyo said withdrawing the Filipino troops from Iraq was in the best interest of the country, particularly the thousands of Filipinos working in Iraq and neighboring Middle East nations.

The government continues to ban the deployment of Filipino workers to Iraq because of the volatile security situation.

But the President said the Philippines would support the results of Iraq's first free elections in half a century.

"We always support democratic processes and the new government elected into office, we congratulate them," Ms Arroyo said. *Juliet Labog-Javellana and AP*

Villar: Don't blackmail us

From page A1

Arroyo himself minced no words.

"Congress cannot be so naïve, nay so idiotic as to accept the bogey foisted by oil companies and IPPs (independent power producers) that if Congress should lift the VAT exemptions, they would just pass on the new levies to the consumers," Arroyo said.

At the third hearing on the VAT measure yesterday, the Senate failed to get the support of almost all of the interest groups invited.

Doctors, lawyers oppose

Doctors, lawyers, real estate developers, contractors, Filipino investors and book publishers thumbed down the measure.

Lawyer Manuel Serrano of the Chamber of Real Estate and Builders Association set the tone for the hearing when he said: "We're opposed to VAT whether in the form of increase or lifting of exemptions, or both."

"Let us leave VAT alone because this is going to hurt the people. I can't imagine government rising upon the ruins of the people."

Marilu Alferez, president of the Subdivision Housing Development Association of the Philippines, objected "to any increase in VAT in whatever form."

Arroyo said this was an "insult" to lawmakers "because for so long as the requirements of due process and non-impairment of contracts are met, Congress can enact laws that would precisely prevent that."

Congress inutile?

"To say otherwise, is to confess that Congress is so inutile that it can be held hostage by vested interests, which cannot be," said the maverick senator.

"Only the oil companies and the IPPs are smugly out of step," said Arroyo, who personally met representatives of the big three oil firms during the hearing on the measure last Wednesday.

Arroyo noted that in effect, the two sectors said: "Go ahead, it won't prejudice us, it would prejudice the consumers."

How certain members of Congress and the executive branch had been taken in by this "farcical argument is beyond belief," he said.

Challenge to Congress

"The oil industry and the IPPs have in effect challenged Congress, however subtly, to go ahead and get them. Congress cannot back down on this.

"Taxation could not be anything less than fair and just, anchored on one's capacity, not willingness to pay," said Arroyo.

He said Congress was certainly not lacking in "ingenuity and creativeness" that it could not craft bills that would lift the VAT exemptions on the oil firms and IPPs and at the same time effectively prevent them from making others pay.

Arroyo said that the nongovernment Foundation for Economic Progress, many of whose members are with the Makati Business Club, Consumers' Price Watch and the Department of Finance, favored lifting of VAT exemptions.

Consensus looms

Sen. Ralph Recto, chair of the ways and means committee, admitted that there was already brewing consensus among senators not to increase the current VAT rate.

"One, possibly no increase from 10 to 12 percent and second, those exempted will be covered within the VAT system with a different rate. That's a possibility," said Recto.

In a statement, Trade Secretary Cesar Purisima clarified that the issue of VAT was not about rising prices "but trying to bring down the overall cost of doing business in the Philippines."

"We have seen how the peso has regained strength from the recent reform measures taken by the Arroyo administration," Purisima said.

"Such strength will have a positive impact on the import cost of all commodities including canned goods, milk, meat and noodles, among others. This will offset any impending increase in prices on account of the new tax bills."

Palace assurance

As the debate over the value-added tax raged in and out of Congress, President Macapagal-Arroyo promised that the final shape of the tax measure would be acceptable to the consumers and the business sector.

"Our legislators are working for a more efficient tax collection system," Ms Arroyo's spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said.

"At the end of the day, we are confident that they would be able to craft a VAT system that is both progressive and pro-poor," Bunye said.

Some opposition lawmakers and various consumer groups have also opposed the House-approved 20-percent increase of VAT from 10 to 12 percent as anti-poor because it would raise the prices of goods and services.

But Malacañang said increasing the VAT rate was necessary to raise more revenues to help the government solve its fiscal problems.

"We welcome all well-meaning debates. What is clear is that we are all on the same boat in wanting our country to move forward," Bunye said. *With a report from Juliet Labog-Javellana, Abigail L. Ho*

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Moody's says RP could get higher credit rating

From page A1

to ensure fiscal sustainability."

However, as pointed out by British banking giant Standard Chartered, Moody's has since toned down its negative view of the country after the government made some significant strides toward fiscal reforms.

"Budget revenues appear to be keeping pace with nominal GDP [gross domestic product] growth in the low teens. The enactment in December 2004 of a liquor and cigarette tax package is a first step toward fiscal consolidation, but more substantial measures are needed. The increase in Napocor rates and sale of Masinloc power plant will considerably help to stem losses," Moody's said.

It also cited the $16-billion gross international reserves as sufficient to "provide some buffer to external shocks in the near term." *Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

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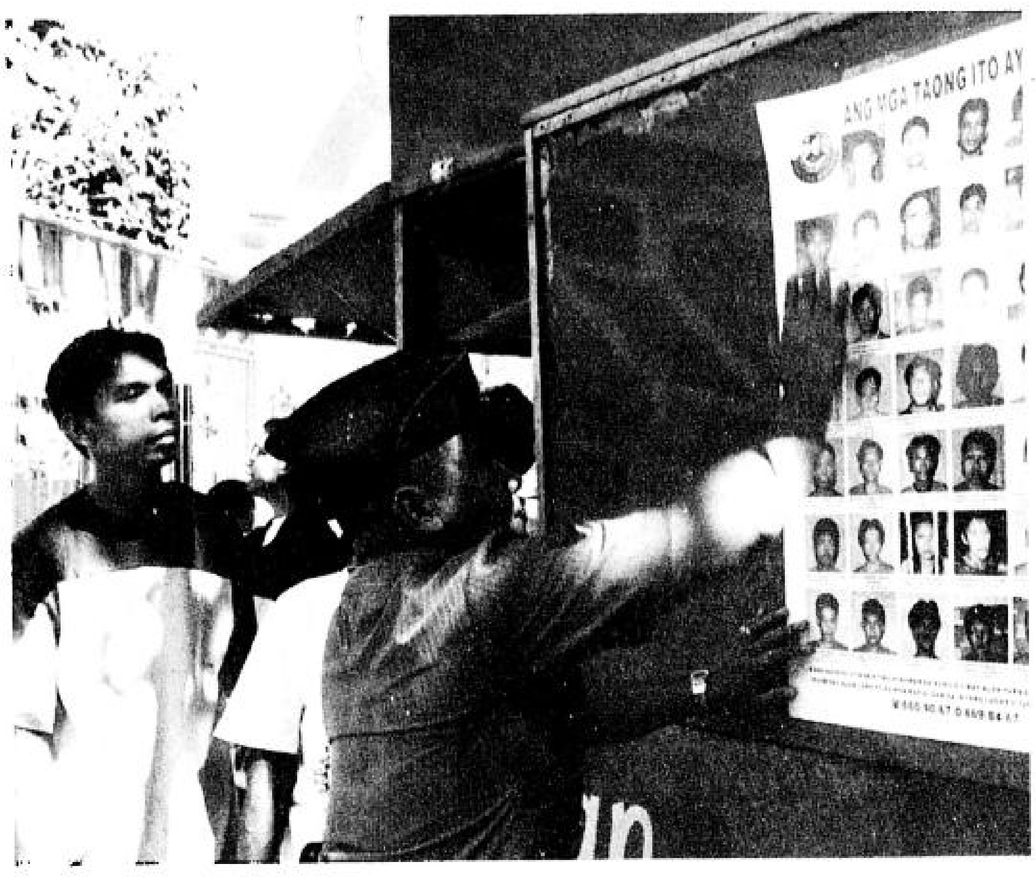
Rizal displays top 40 poster (bad) boys



LAW ENFORCERS are kept busy putting up these posters in public markets, schools, barangay halls—and, not to forget—police stations. JOAN BONDOC

By Luige A. del Puerto

RIZAL province has come out with its own "poster boys," but the guys are probably not the types you could bring home to meet your mother.

To boost the province's anticrime campaign, police yesterday distributed some 1,500 posters of persons with alleged criminal records in markets, schools, terminals, 14 police stations and other public places.

On each poster are photographs of 40 persons and their corresponding cases, said Senior Supt. Leocadio Santiago, Rizal police chief, adding that many on the list had been linked to robbery cases.

"We want people to be able to identify persons who may have victimized them in the past so they don't become victims for a second time. When they see these posters in jeepneys (or FX taxis), they can immediately get in touch with the police, or get out of the vehicle to avoid them," he said.

"These persons have (criminal) cases," the posters read. "If you have been victimized, or if you know something that would absolve them, contact us."

By phrasing the poster blurb this way, police avoid branding the persons concerned as criminals. Doing so would make the police vulnerable to legal issues, authorities said.

"These persons have cases in court, and are out on bail. At times, they are able to leave jail because the victims do not pursue cases against them," Santiago said.

"While they are yet to be convicted or acquitted, we can't just allow them to continue their activities," he added.

The National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force (Naktaf) had encouraged the idea of placing photos and names of wanted persons in public places.

The antikidnapping task force also showed the posters on national television.

Police officials later said the posters had been an effective tool in curbing criminal activities.

Funding for the Rizal posters came from civic groups like the Rotary Club, the Rizal Chamber of Commerce and the Free Masons society.

Fake agent posts nude pix on 'Net

By Tina G. Santos and Leila B. Salaverria

A MAN posing as a talent scout has been charged for allegedly using minor male students as nude models in his Internet chat room.

Junart Reyes of Velin Mansion, Tolentino Street, San Francisco del Monte, Quezon City, has been charged before the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office with violation of the Special Protection of Children Against Child Abuse Act and the Revised Penal Code.

Reyes reportedly used the aliases Junart Torres, Chad Ranier, Randolf Furton and Samuel Lemuel Alfonso.

Members of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) confiscated computer equipment and several diskettes during a raid of the suspect's house Jan. 28. The computer's hard drive and the diskettes were found to contain pictures of nude young men.

Three male high school students alleged the suspect ordered them to pose nude in front of a video camera connected to a computer as the suspect chatted on the Internet.

Allegedly using a fictitious "chat room" name, the suspect invited Internet friends to view young high school boys in the nude and doing sex acts.

The raiders, armed with a search warrant from Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 220 Judge Jose Paneda, also recovered identification cards with different names the suspect allegedly used.

The victims claimed the suspect offered them money and told them they would be groomed as "models." Inviting the victims to his condominium unit for drinks, the suspect allegedly instructed the boys to pose nude in front of the camera as he chatted on the Internet. The victims claimed they were paid P500 to P1,000.

Meanwhile, a mother and her daughter were arrested for allegedly operating from their home in Cavite an Internet pornography site linked to an American website.

Thelma Labarda, 46, and her daughter Christine, 26, of Queensrow, Molino, Bacoor, Cavite, are also facing a complaint for bribery for allegedly offering agents of the National Bureau of Investigation P216,000 in exchange for their freedom.

The suspects' website was affiliated with the US-based www.ifriends.net, according to Palmer Mallari of the NBI's Anti-Fraud and Computer Crime Division. It allegedly allowed customers in other countries to view for a fee Filipino women doing sex acts.

Customers reportedly paid $3.99 per minute, of which $1 went to the suspects. Some chat sessions cost as much as $105.

Robbers shoot passengers in jeepney heist

THREE jeepney passengers, including a father and his daughter, were shot as they tried to fight off robbers in San Juan early yesterday morning.

Shot in the head were Ximary Rafael, 21, and her father Romeo. Ronald Espinosa, 22, was hit in the chest, police said.

The victims were on board a passenger jeepney on Aurora Boulevard on the way to Cubao, Quezon City, at around 1 a.m. when the robbers declared the heist.

The victims apparently put up a struggle, police said. "There was a commotion, and it looked like they tried to fight back," said Supt. Rodel Jocson, town police chief.

Jocson said the robbers looked young and had appeared to have panicked, prompting them to shoot the victims.

Only Espinosa's bag was missing, police said. *Luige del Puerto*

METROBRIEFS

Computer shop rob

THREE unidentified armed robbers barged into a computer shop yesterday, killing the owner and wounding his mother and a customer. The robbery took place at E-Channel Computer Shop located at Quasay Street, Zone 1 Signal Village, Taguig City, at 12:45 a.m. Police identified the slain computer shop owner as Alexto Trocio, 25. The victim's mother Dioniosa, 63, and Ryan Mactuca, a customer, were rushed to the hospital and are in critical condition. Trocio was shot when he refused to give the day's earnings and his cell phone to the robbers. The suspects took off in a taxi carrying an undetermined amount of money and other equipment from the computer shop. *Nancy C. Carvajal*

Free heart surgery

THE LIGA ng mga Barangay sa Pilipinas said it would offer free heart surgery to barangay officials at the Philippine Heart Center in Quezon City. James Marty Lim, National Liga ng mga Barangay President, said that Liga had tied up with the Philippine Heart Center to give ailing barangay officials access to free heart surgery including room accommodation, free drugs and medicines, free diagnostic and therapeutic procedures, free surgery and surgical expenses, free operating room fees and free central supplies. The benefits can be availed of exclusively by the punong barangay, kagawad, SK chair, barangay treasurers and barangay secretaries.

Youth movement

DR. EMMANUEL Y. Angeles will officially launch the Movement for a Strong Philippines before presidents of leading universities from the country's 16 regions today at the Quezon City Sports Club. The MSP is a nonpolitical, nonpartisan organization which envisions to serve as a vehicle in fostering awareness on the role of the Filipino youth for a just, peaceful and strong nation through education and training.

Trees felled for parking lot

By Nancy C. Carvajal

LIKE thieves in the night, they waited until the coast was clear before they started cutting down the trees to make way for a parking lot.

Residents along the Naia Road in Parañaque City told the INQUIRER that a crew from the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority allegedly axed narra, mahogany and fruit-bearing trees planted on the sidewalk along Pidera Street, Naia Road, at dawn yesterday.

"They were like thieves cutting trees at 1 a.m. while most of us were sleeping," said Julieta Buatis who told the INQUIRER that she decided to stay awake when she heard the noise.

"My two trees were spared because I guarded [them]. The other trees were not as lucky," Buatis said. She added that she probably scared off the workers when she pretended to be taking a video of the tree-cutting.

MMDA workers in the area refused to say if they were responsible for cutting down the trees. Rolly Acid of the MMDA Action Center for Infrastructure Development, however, said the area was being cleared to give way to a parking lot. Two other MMDA employees said they were at the site to discuss the project with the contractor who would build the parking slots.

A piece of gossip that made the rounds

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

I DON'T know about the other governors, but I can believe the allegation of Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago that the past and present governors of Davao Oriental were not or are not doing anything about illegal logging in the province.

I visited Davao Oriental, my home province, late last year and from a restaurant by the beach, I saw logs being loaded on a ship. Where did those logs come from, I asked myself. Logging stopped in the mountains of San Ignacio, Manay, my hometown, years ago.

The present governor of my province is Ma. Elena Palma-Gil, and her predecessor is Rosalinda Lopez. Didn't they know that logs were being cut in Davao Oriental? If they didn't, then there must be something wrong with them, because everybody there knows about it.

I can also believe that Aurora Gov. Bellaflor Angara-Castillo knew about the illegal cutting of trees in her province when she was still in Congress. Yet she didn't do anything about it. Her brother, Sen. Edgardo Angara, also knew of illegal logging activities in Quezon and Aurora but didn't lift a finger to stop it. The Angaras had the persuasive power to stop illegal logging because of their exalted positions. But they didn't.

* * *

Gossip has spread that Lucy Torres is a kleptomaniac. That piece of gossip allegedly came from Karen Davila and Ces Drilon, television anchors of ABS-CBN. But the story has been making the rounds for some time. It's been in text messages and is the subject of coffee shop talk.

The item made it to the news when, during a party, Drilon supposedly asked San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito if he had heard of it. Ejercito, apparently not one to keep a private conversation private, reported Drilon's query. Why would people believe rumors that come out of text messages? Remember the rumors in text messages that Pope John Paul II had died?

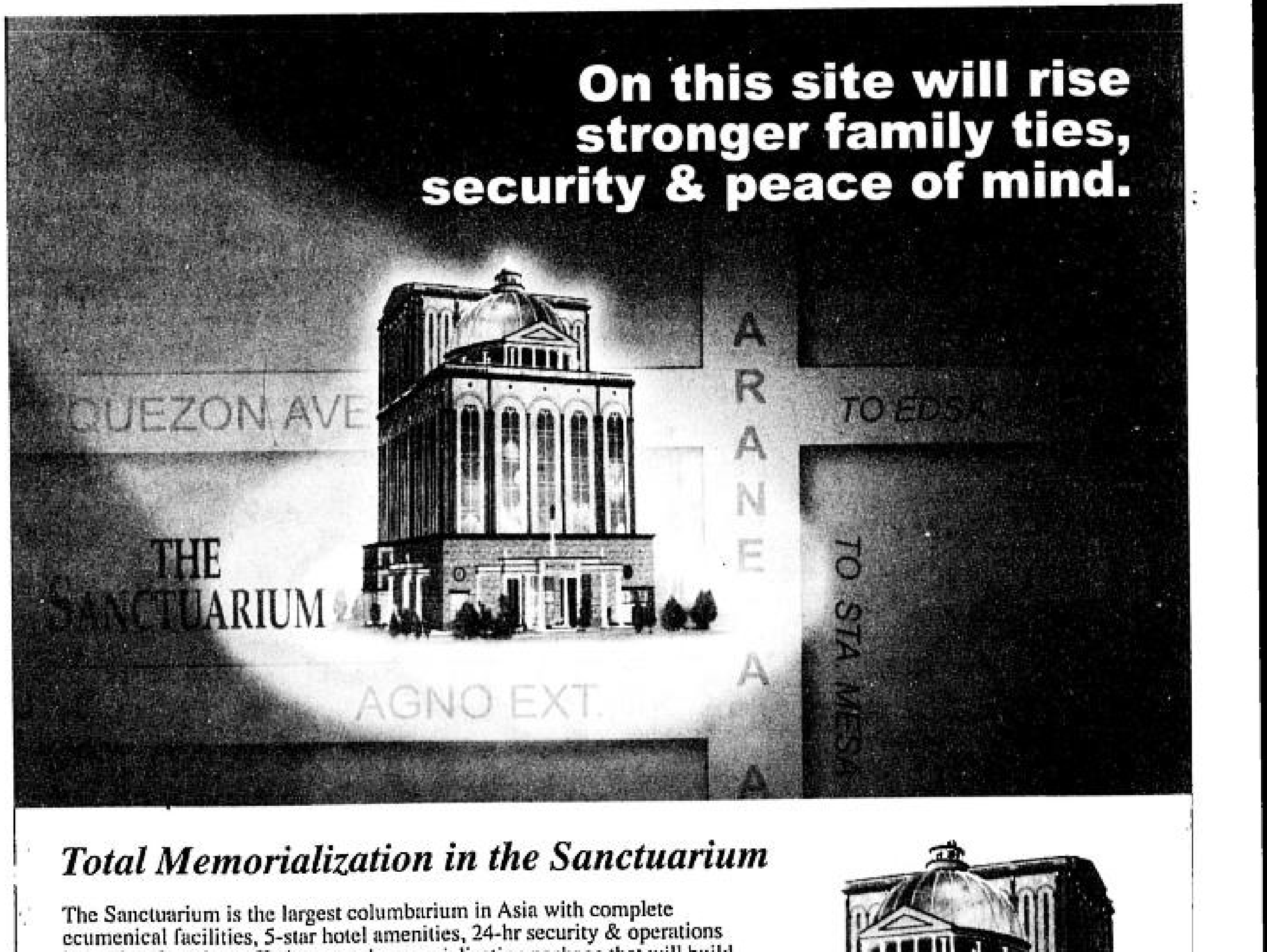
But if Lucy Torres, scion of an affluent family in Ormoc City and wife of famous actor and TV host Richard Gomez, was indeed a klepto, people should not deride or laugh at her. They should sympathize with her.

Kleptomania is a compulsion to steal anything, even things not valuable. It's a disease that can be cured by a psychoanalyst or a psychiatrist. Lest I be misunderstood, I'm not saying Lucy Torres is a klepto. I'm saying that if she is, then she needs professional help.

* * *

Fr. Bel R. San Luis was apparently referring to me when he said in his column in another paper: "The columnist concerned ought to be very slow and extra careful in condemning people because of the irreparable damage and harm done to them. As Christ puts it, 'Do not judge others so that God will not judge you. Why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the log in your own eye? You hypocrites! Remove first the log in your own eye, and then you will be able to see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.'"

So, you think I'm a hypocrite, Father Bel? Why don't you look at yourself first before calling your fellow columnist a hypocrite? What have you done for your fellowmen apart from saying Mass and hearing confession?



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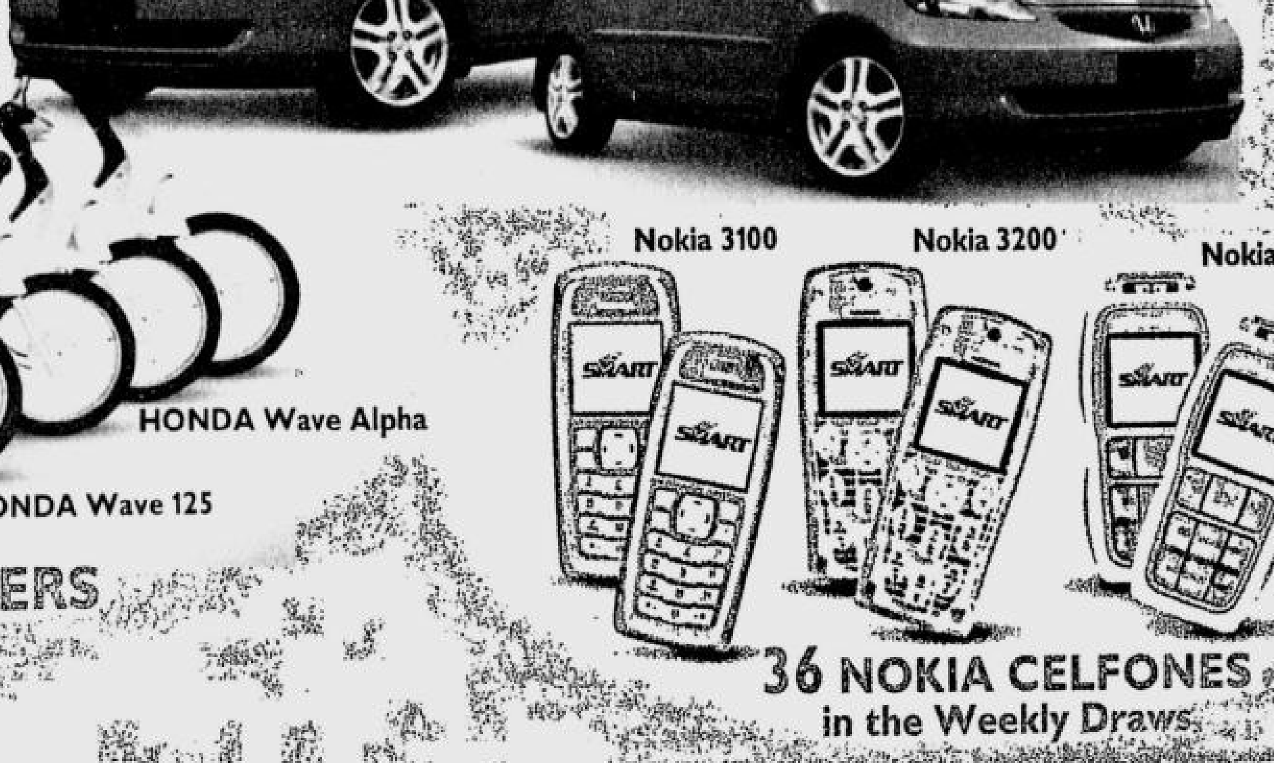

2 HONDA JAZZ
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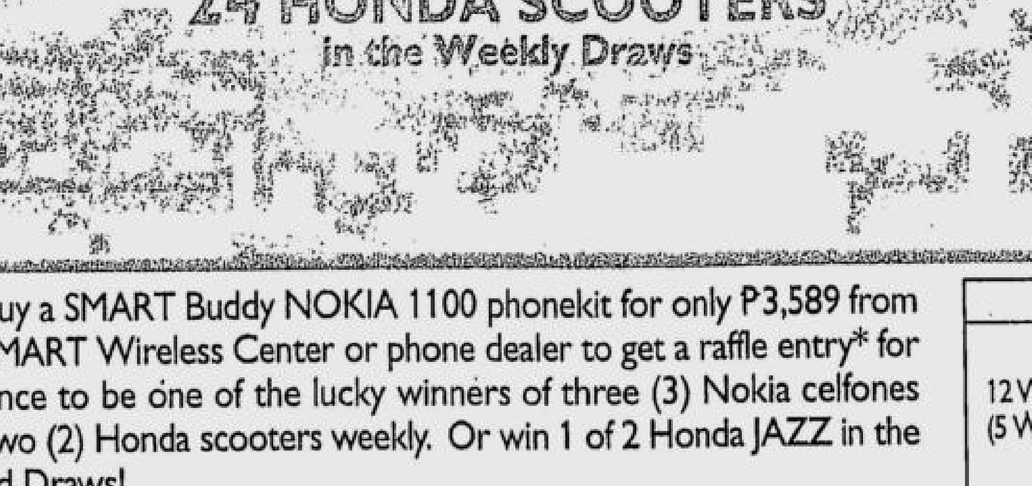

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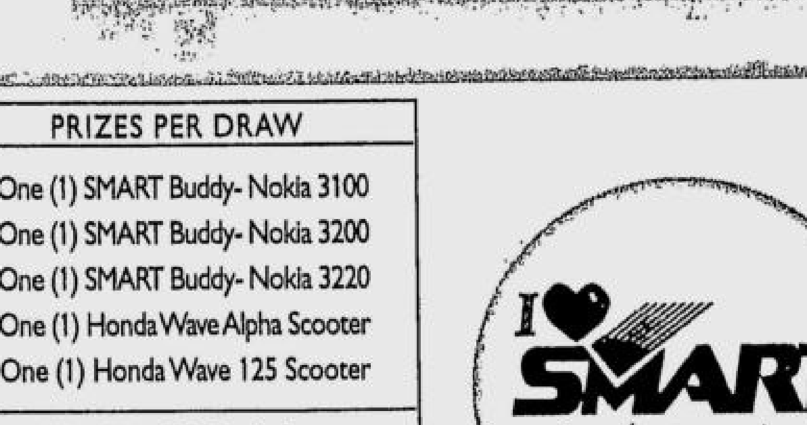
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US NCAA - Syracuse vs Pittsburgh; 3 p.m. (r); Missouri vs Kansas; 5 p.m. (r); ESPN - Take another look at this pair of college basketball encounters.

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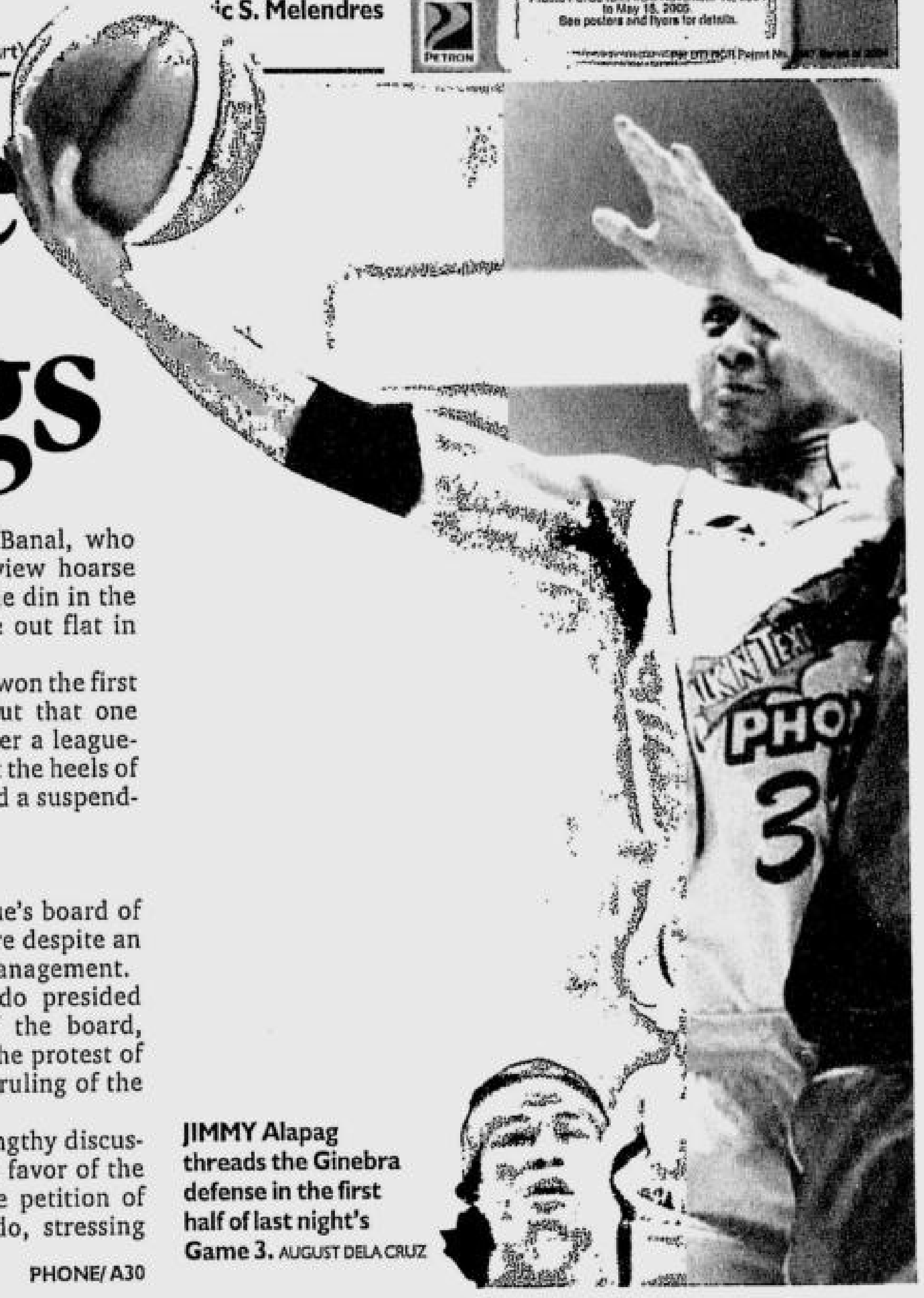
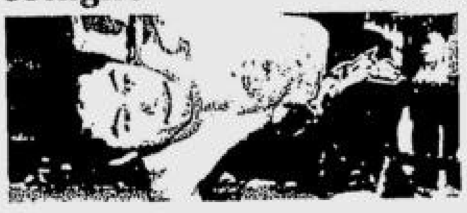


JIMMY Alapag threads the Ginebra defense in the first half of last night's Game 3. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

WHAT'S INSIDE

- **Jewels try to keep glow vs Paintmasters tonight** /A26



- **Please don't destroy me–Pacquiao** /A32

GAME TOMORROW (*Araneta Coliseum*)
6:20 p.m.—Best Player of the Conference awarding
6:30 p.m.—Talk 'N Text vs Barangay Ginebra (*Game 4, best-of-seven Finals*)

By June Navarro

TALK 'N Text proved it can thrive even amid extreme conditions.

The Phone Pals rose above adversity by crushing the Barangay Ginebra Kings, 102-66, last night in Game 3 of the Gran Matador PBA Philippine Cup Finals at the Araneta Coliseum.

Willie Miller and Jimmy Alapag crushed the Kings' morale as early as the first half, as the Phone Pals finally hammered out a victory that counted and trimmed Ginebra's lead in the best-of-seven series, 1-2.

Miller pumped in 16 of his 25 points in the first 20 minutes of action while Alapag went five of 10 from the three-point area to finish with 17 points, 11 of them scored in the first half.

"It always happens when you're 2-0," said Talk 'N Text coach Joel Banal, who came to the post-game interview hoarse with all the screaming amid the din in the coliseum. "You'll always come out flat in Game 3."

The Phone Pals had actually won the first game of the series, 89-71, but that one counted in Ginebra's favor after a league-ordered forfeiture that came at the heels of Talk 'N Text's insistence to field a suspended Asi Taulava.

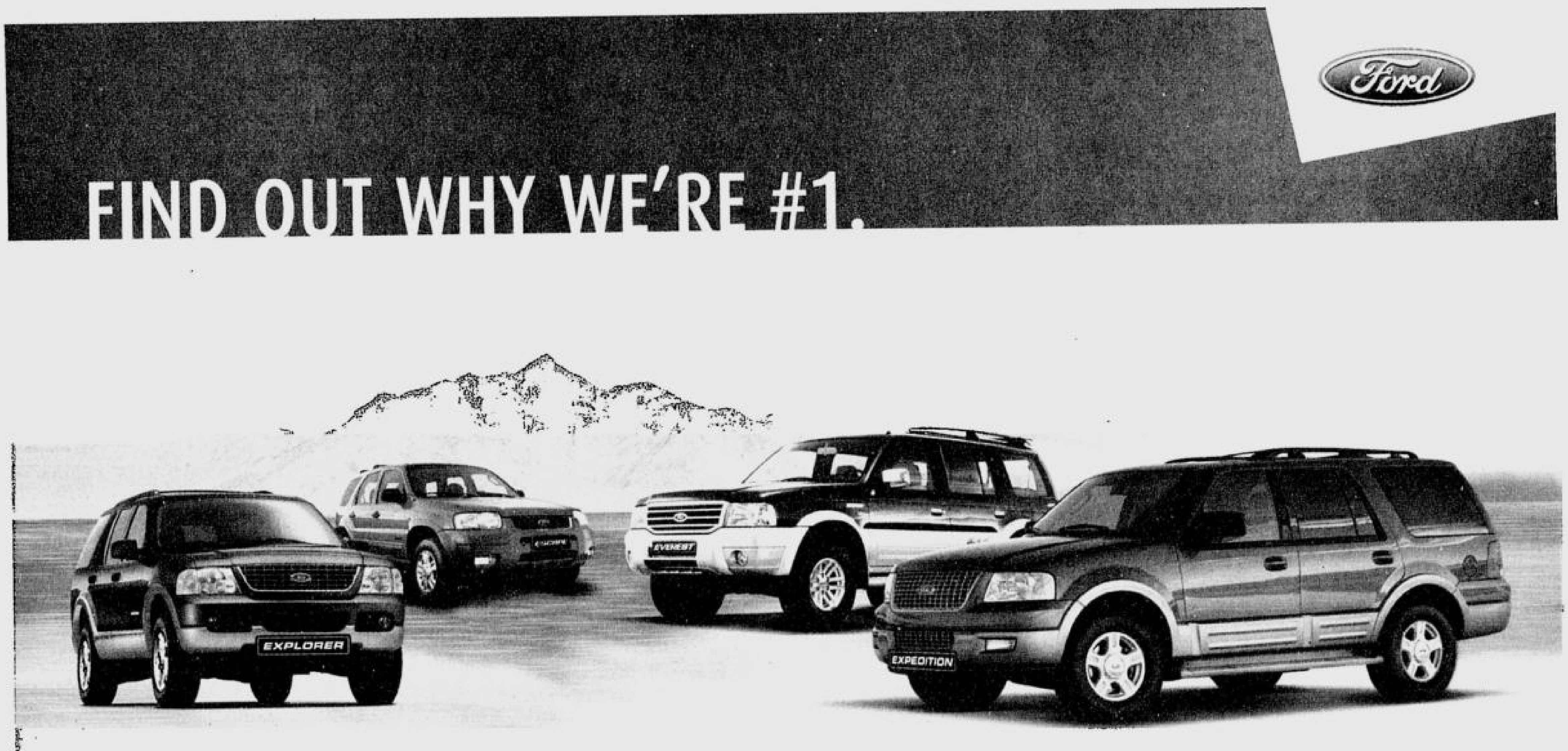
Appeal rejected

Earlier in the day, the league's board of governors upheld the forfeiture despite an appeal from the Talk 'N Text management.

PBA chair Buddy Encarnado presided over the special meeting of the board, which unanimously rejected the protest of the Phone Pals to reverse the ruling of the commissioner's office.

"After an exhaustive and lengthy discussion, the board has spoken in favor of the commissioner and denied the petition of Talk 'N Text," said Encarnado, stressing

PHONE/ A30



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Jewels try to keep glow vs Paintmasters tonight

GAME TODAY (*Makati Coliseum*)
2 p.m.—PBL Achievement Awards
3:30 p.m.—Welcoat vs Montaña
(*Game 3 of best-of-five finals*)

AS THE PBL Open Championship series turns unpredictable, coach Robert Sison chose to be more careful with his statements.

"Whoever gets Game 3 has a big advantage," said Sison as his Montaña Jewels seek a 2-1 lead against the Welcoat Paintmasters in Game 3 of the best-of-five title series at 3:30 p.m. today at the Makati Coliseum.

Sison's observation may seem obvious, but momentum could indeed spell the difference for the two squads which both look strong enough to bag the championship crown.

But before one team moves a win closer to the title, the league will honor its best performers at 2 p.m.

Arwind Santos of Magnolia-FEU, Jon Dan Salvador of Montaña, Anthony Washington of Welcoat, Mac Cardona of ICTSI-La Salle, and JR Quiñahan of Granny Goose are among the favorites for the Most Valuable Player plum and other individual awards.

In the finals series, however, it was Jewels veteran Alex Compton who picked up the slack for the missing offensive game of Salvador.

Al Vergara, Paul Guerrero and Eric dela Cuesta also delivered off the bench in Montaña's Game 2 victory, 55-48, last Thursday.

"We will come out aggressive," said Sison. "Welcoat is a talented team but I believe in my team. We showed that in Game 2, and we're hoping to do it again in Game 3."

"We relied much on our defense the last time," he added. "We're hoping we can do the little things we did in Game 2."

Welcoat coach Caloy Garcia, however, pointed out his team's own advantages.

"We were able to match their speed and we still outrebounded them," noted Garcia, whose Paintmasters took Game 1 via a 73-65 decision last Tuesday.

"I will do everything to help my team win in Game 3," said Washington, who's averaging 15.5 points and 15 rebounds in the finals. "The series is pretty even but if we can play with intensity, just like we did in Game 1, we have good chances."

Unlike Washington's exceptional performance, however, the Jewels' main man seemingly had the finals jitters.

Although Salvador provided the hustle at the defensive end, he hasn't shown the offensive spark that made him one of the best all-around players this conference.

In Game 1, the 6-foot-4 bruiser shot seven points in a 20-percent field goal shooting. And he was no better in Game 2 when he posted his conference-low record of six points in a 25-percent shooting clip. *Jasmine W. Payo*

PDI PHOTO

DENNIS Concha of Granny Goose tries to elude Montaña's Al Vergara.

Salvador struggling but trying hard

By Jasmine W. Payo

SALVADOR PDI PHOTO

MONTAÑA Jewels' main man Jon Dan Salvador has been ignoring the boos of the crowd in the title series of the PBL Open Championship. But he still can't hide the frustration every time he misses in one of his low-post moves.

It is, indeed, the worst possible time to deliver an anemic performance, especially now that the 6-foot-4 forward is leading the race for the Most Valuable Player award.

"I'm having difficulty with my offense, but I'm compensating with defense and hustle," Salvador said. "That's because we're playing against veterans."

Although Salvador has been performing below expectations lately, it was his dominating presence that led the Jewels to their first finals appearance since joining the league in 1998.

Before his measly finals production, Salvador was averaging 12.9 points and 8.1 rebounds.

Welcoat Paints' Anthony Washington, however, has been delivering a more consistent performance in the past three months.

The 6-foot-7 Fil-Am rookie has made his presence felt in a big way by posting a double-double average of 14.8 points and 10.1 rebounds. And he can make a variety of shots—from slam dunks to three-pointers—seemingly without effort.

But it seems that Washington is more interested in bagging the championship title for the Paintmasters than winning any individual honors.

"When the team was formed, our goal is to reach the finals," the 22-year-old forward said. "I'm really excited to be in the finals. With the way we played early in the conference, nobody expected us to be here. But as a team, we know we are capable of winning it in the finals."

But Washington isn't the only rookie who made a name this conference. JR Quiñahan of Granny Goose tallied 9.8 ppg, 8.7 rpg, and leads the league in blocks at 2.4 bpg.

Arwind Santos of Magnolia-FEU, last conference's MVP, also remains a strong contender for the top individual award.

Before the Wizards sadly collapsed in the semifinals, Santos shot 10.9 ppg and grabbed 9.1 rpg.

Mac Cardona of ICTSI-La Salle consistently topped the statistical race at 23.1 ppg and 6.1 rpg. But unfortunately, the Archers bowed out early in the quarterfinals.

Other top performers vying for individual honors are Welcoat's Marvin Ortiguerra, Montaña's Al Magpayo, and Magnolia-FEU's Warren Ybañez, Cesar Catli, Jason Misolas and Dennis Miranda.

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TV GUIDE
Saturday February 5, 2005

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Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2	Ek Channel		Y Speak		Nanlig The Hidden Files		TBA		TV Patrol	Magandang Gabi Bayan		Star Cinema Presents			Home Along The Airport		Kontrobersyal		Sports Unlimited
NBN	Value Vision		Value Vision			GSIS Member's Hour		Yan Ang Pinoy		Gold & Glory In Grace		Search For The 1st Tanduay Billiards Player		To Be Announced			Business & Leisure		
ABC 5	Smart TV	The Basketball Show		Soccer Showdown		Loren		Diretsahan		Viva Box Office				Sing Galing		Maverick & Ariel	ABC Cinema		
GMA 7	Startalk			Wish Ko Lang	Wag Kukurap (4:45 PM)		Pinoy Pop Superstar		Bitoy's Funniest Videos		Extra Challenge	Imbestigador (8:15 PM)			Idol Ko Si Kap			Game Face In Concert	
RPN 9		Biyahang Langit	Bayan I-Text Mo Rebo		Kids TV	Hanapbuhay Overseas		Isumbong mo kay Tulfo		7 Days		JAG							
IBC 13		Home Shopping Network		Global Family Series		Home Shopping Network		Amerika Atbp		V League				Bitag		In This Corner		Ugnayang Pambansa	
Solar	Tough Enough	WWE Bottomline		Wwe Raw				Wwe Heat		Wow				UFC Recall				Thunder Box	
Nickelodeon	Girls In Love	Kenan & Kel	As Told By Ginger	All Grown Up	My Dad The Rock Star	Drake & Josh	Yakkity Yak	Danny Phantom	My Life As A Teenage Robot	SpongeBob SquarePants	Fairly Odd Parents	Sabrina, The Teenage Witch	Romeo	Girls In Love	Kenan & Kel	As Told By Ginger	Rocket Power	Hey Arnold!	The Wild Thornberrys
MYX		Urban MYX	MYX Backtrax	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	MYX Presents		Top Of The Pops	MYX Remakes	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	Club MYX	Take 5	OPM MYX		MYX Live!	
ETC		Dateline		The Today Show		Saturday Night Live		NBC Nightly News	Entertainment Tonight	One Tree Hill		Queer Eye For A Straight Guy		Saturday Night Live		Tonight Show With Jay Leno		Elimidate	Change of Heart
Cinema One	Otso-Otso Pamela-Mela Wan				Ngayon At Kailan Man				My Movie				S3: Gregor Butch Belgica Story				Ayos Lang Pare Ko		Real Deal
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AXN			Agent Of Influence				The Making Of	The Right Stuff II	Rated X	Now See This	Now See This	Ripley's Believe It or Not		Alias (Season III)		My Best Friend's Wedding			
Star World	Action Man	Totally Outrageous Behavior Caught On Tape	When Hidden Cameras Attack	Miami Vice		Adventure Inc		Roswell		Dark Angel		TNA Wrestling/ One Night Only! Rod Stewart In Concert		When Good Pets Go Bad 1/ Saturday Shockumentaries		Coupling/ Dog The Bounty Hunter	Absolute Power/ Cops	The Kumars At No. 42	Goodness Gracious Me
CNN	Diplomatic License	World News	World Business This Week	World News	People In The News	Larry King Live		World News'	World Sport		Spark	World News	Design 360	World News	Talk Asia	World News	The Daily Show John Stewart Global Edition	World News	World Sport
National Geographic	On Assignment	Big Bite Night				Wild Life Adventure		Creature Feature				Saturday Unlimited				Big Bite Night			
Solar Sports	Copenhagen Masters MS Final			The Next Gen. Hardcourt '05 Finals	Sounds of the Finals			GWS ep.4-2005	Greatest Classics				NBA TV Daily	NBA Game New York @ Sacramento					NBA Inside Stuff
Lifestyle Network	Carol Duvall	HGTV Special		Radical Sabbatical	Road & Track	Genuine Article	Food Fight	Date Plate	Emeril Live		Nigella Bites	Brini Maxwell Show	Royalty A-Z		Modern Girl's Guide	E! True Hollywood Story		Look For Less	BTVR
HBO				Tommy Boy (3:50 PM)			Multiplicity				I Spy (7:25 PM)			Lost In Translation			Final Destination 2		
Star Movies			Killer Bees (3:45 PM)				Igby Goes Down			Con Air (7:05 PM)				The Transporter			The Guru		
Cartoon Network		The Detective Squad	Tom & Jerry Show	Swat Kats	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	X-Men Evolution	Justice League	Atomic Betty	Foster's Home For Imaginary Friends	Xiaolin Showdown			The Looney Tunes Show	Cartoon Cartoon Show	Power Rangers Wild Force	Zoids: Fuzors	Time Squad	Harvey Birdman (11:15PM)	Justice League
ESPN	Super Bowl XXXVII Highlights: Buccaneers vs Raiders	Big East Conf.: Syracuse vs. Pittsburgh				Big 12 Conf Basketball Missouri vs. Kansas				Big East Conf.: Providence vs. Pittsburgh				NBA Game Mavericks vs. Pacers					NBA Game Rockets vs Timberwolves
Disney Channel	Potatoes And Dragons	Sabrina's Secret Life	The Legend Of Tarzan	Wicked Science	Viva S Club	Martin Mystery/ That's So Raven/ Dave The Barbarian/Phil Of The Future				Lizzie Mcguire	Wonderful World Of Disney			My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	According To Jim	America's Funniest Home Video	Wonderful World Of Disney	
Cinemax		The Scoundrel's Wife			Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure				The Perfect Husband			Hook					American Pie The Wedding (10:20PM)		
Hallmark Channel		Murder Without Conviction				A Christmas Carol				Mystery Woman				Back When We Were Grown Ups			Midsomer Murders, Garden Of Death		
Discovery Channel		Human Discovery		Ultimate Cars	Building The Ultimate	Unsolved History				Wild Discovery				Rides		The New Detectives		Extreme Discovery	
MTV Philippines				One Bad Trip	Cribs	MTV Rockd	Globally Dismissed	MTV Upgraded	Non-Stop Hits	MTV Screen	MTV Urban Beats	Spring Break	Non-Stop Hits	2005 MTV VJ Hunt Special Part 1			Non-Stop Hits	VH1 TV Moments: Janet Jackson	
Sports Plus		Arena Football Sabercats vs. Bay Storm						Raceworld		Bikini Destination	Acc Basketball Georgia @ Maryland					FBR Open Day2			
EWTN	Defending Life	Angelus (3:15 PM)	G.K. Chesterton	My Little Angels	The Donut Man	The Holy Rosary With Mother Angelica and the Nuns Of Our Lady Of Angels Monastery	Black And Roman Catholic	Catholic Compass		The World Over		Fr. John Corapi		Daily Mass		Angelus (10:15PM)	The Church And Culture Today	Life on The Rock Encore	

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National swim team sets sights on SEAG title

FOR A CHANGE, the Philippine Amateur Swimming Association will no longer be scrounging for funds in its preparations for international competitions.

This developed after Bank of Commerce owner Tonyboy Cojuangco agreed to be the godfather of aquatics, which also includes water polo and diving, during the pledging session presided by First Gentleman Mike Arroyo last month.

Pasa chief Monchito Ilagan, secretary general Francisco Rivera, National Capital Region Amateur Swimming Association lawyer Bernadeth Abejo and Pasa ways and means chair Odeth Chingbian paid a courtesy call to Bank of Commerce president and CEO Raul de Mesa last week to present their plans for the Philippine aquatics team competing in the coming Southeast Asian Games.

Ilagan said that with the full support of Cojuangco, Pasa's mission is now to win the overall title in the swimming events of the SEAG slated in the country late November up to December.

"With this financial help, the training and preparation expenses of our swimmers are not a problem anymore, so winning the overall title in the SEA Games is not a far fetch dream anymore," he said.

De Mesa, in behalf of Cojuangco, assured the Pasa officials of the Bank of Commerce's financial assistance for the biennial meet.

Meanwhile, the second Speedo-Pasa national tryouts will be transferred from Lipa, Batangas, to San Pablo City swimming complex in Laguna, on Feb. 25-27.

SWIMMING SUPPORTER: Chito Rivera (left), Raul de Mesa (middle), Chito Ilagan, lawyer Bernadette Abejo (upper left) and Odeth Chiongbian during the courtesy call.

NCA hosts 7-cock

THE PREMIERE National Cockers Association (NCA), recognized as the biggest and most prestigious group of big time cockers and breeders, present another 7-cock derby on Feb. 8 and 10 (Tuesday and Thursday) at the air-conditioned Araneta Coliseum.

To host the event are Reps. Ronnie Punó and Gerry "Boy" Espina, two of NCA's newest members. Puno and Espina said at least 40 participants will compete on Tuesday's opening round.

Submission of entries will be on Monday from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Araneta green gate. For details, call 911-3101 and 911-2928 (look for Gloria Avena).

Three entries emerged as co-champions in last Thursday's 7-cock event: Lucky Rin Firefly Binangonan II of Rene Medina and Ric de Guzman, VGB Escalibur of Vice Gov. Boyet Joson and Binangonan Balbina of Gov. Ito Ynares and former ambassador Danding Cojuangco.

The three entries posted identical six wins and one loss.

Meanwhile, NCA secretary-general Jun Santiago announced that new scholars will be supported by the NCA for the coming school year June 2005-2006.

JONEL Ababa of Apo Golf (right) studies his line of putt with businessman Tony Arevalo who volunteered to be his caddie for the final round.
JESS YUSON

NAT'L CADDIES

Ababa settles for 2-shot win

By Musong R. Castillo

TINY Jonel Ababa fought with the heart of a winner and signed for an 80 over at the Wack Wack East layout that played super tough to capture the National Caddies Open by two shots over a fellow Davaoeño yesterday.

Long off the tee despite his size and showing magical touch around the greens, the Apo Golf bet finished the way he needed—par-par—for a 310 total in the event presented by the FG Sports Foundation, Pagcor and San Miguel Corp. and backed by Nike and the Philippine Sports Commission.

Ababa flirted with disaster, dropping five shots on the 15th and the 16th with brothers Mark and Joseph Labajo hot on his heels.

But he regrouped in time, nailing a 12-footer for par on the 18th after having to play out on his second shot, as Joseph Labajo of Valley finished second with a 312 total after a 78.

"I was very nervous going to the last five holes," said Ababa in Filipino. "I've never felt pressure like that. I was lucky to have regrouped in time."

Mario, Joseph's elder brother who represented Matina, assembled a 79 and finished alone in third with a 313, with Wack Wack bet Antonio Depelo submitting a 77 to finish fourth another stroke back.

The tournament was a huge success, with more than 130 players teeing off in the first round at Calatagan Golf Club on Tuesday.

The organizers—Ben Abalos, Hermie Esguerra, Tony Arevalo and Tommy Manotoc—vowed to make the event even bigger next year.

"We came up with this tournament for you, that's why we exhort you to prepare even harder," said an official NCO statement.

Elmer Saban, second at the start of the day just three back, ballooned to an 84 and finished fifth, seven shots off even as Nueva Ecija's Alfredo Repato (81) and Danilo Nivera (80) of valley shared sixth spot.

Philippine team members and former bagtoters Boyet Saragoza, Jay Bayron, Jun Bernis and Juvic Pagunsan, together with pro Caloy Nival and Arevalo, caddied for the members of the last two flights.

Ababa and the Labajo brothers will go under the care of the organization through Manotoc. They will be housed, fed and funded for the next year at the least and trained to become Philippine team caliber.

Apo actually put four entries into the final round, and the NCO will award a perpetual trophy to the officers of the club for being this year's champion golf club.

The top 20 scores:

310—Ababa (77-72-81-80), 312—Joseph Labajo (81-77-76-78), 313—Mario Labajo (78-78-78-79), 314—Depelo (84-74-79-77), 317—Elmer Saban (82-77-74-84), 318—Repato (81-79-77-81), Nivera (80-80-78-80), 319—Bustamante (77-80-82-80), 321—Bayron (), 323—Harabe (81-77-83-82), 324—Fernando (81-83-70-90), Marcelo (82-77-79-86), Abalos (85-80-81-78), 325—Cresenciano Saban (82-85-77-81), Tumbaga (86-83-77-79), 328—Malaga (75-79-83-90), 329—Pepito 84-80-81-84), 331—Mise 81-78-87-85), 332—Glimada (79-84-78-91), 336—Anzures (86-82-76-92)

50 fights tonight

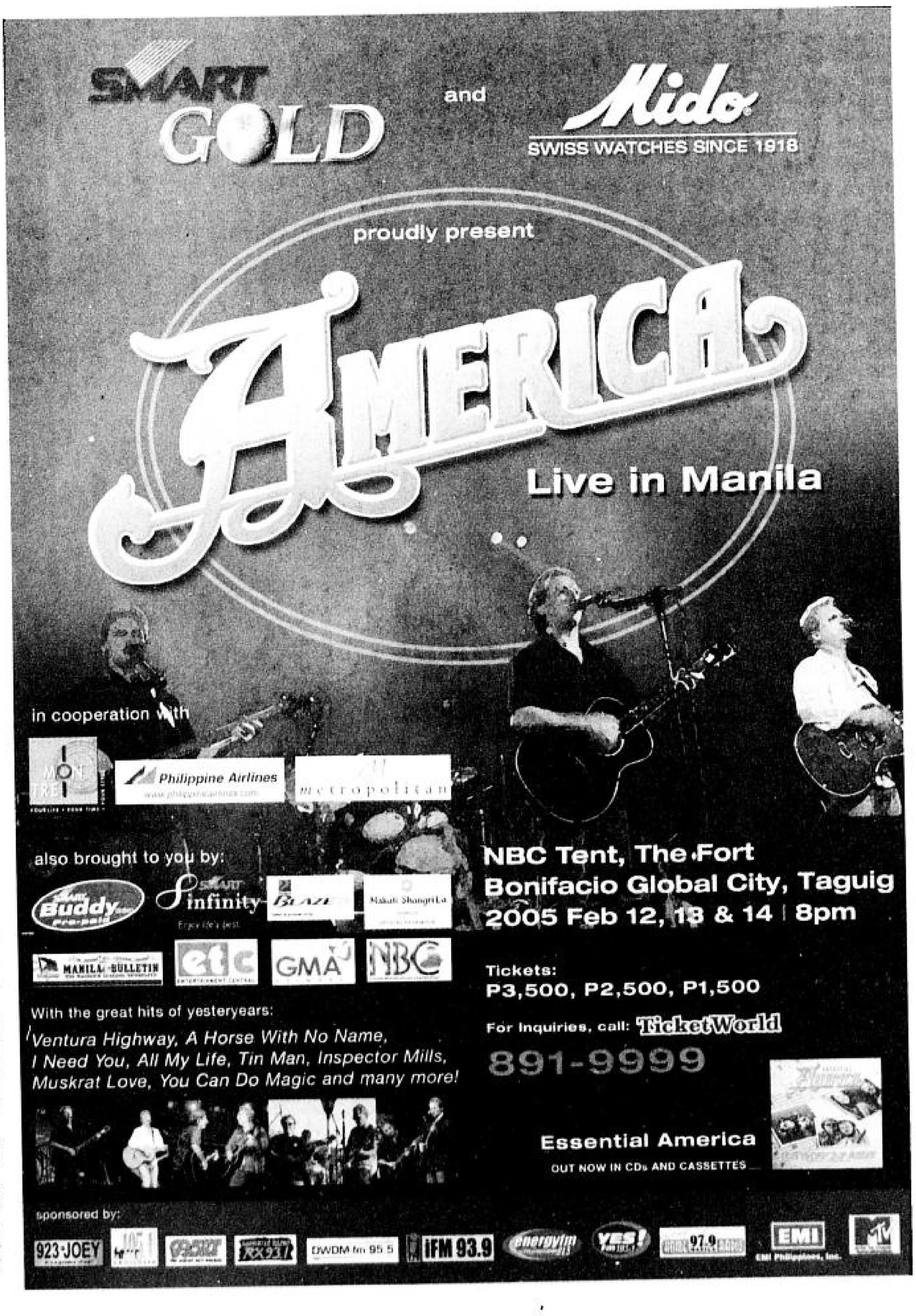
ABOUT 50 fights are lined-up beginning at 7 tonight in another 3-cock derby at the fully air-conditioned Las Piñas Coliseum, with Sagupaan Complexor 3000, Sagupaan B-50 Forten and Sagupaan Mite Free as sponsors.

The event will be hosted by Yoyoy Dahonog of Las Piñas who invited some 35 participants from Cavite, Laguna, Batangas and Metro Manila. Entry fee is P5,500. Entries will be accepted until 2 p.m. and interested parties may call 873-1040 and 874-3910.

Meanwhile, veteran cocker Benjie Lim topped the second leg of "Gentleman Cockers Association of the Philippines (GCAP) 7-Cock Derby" last Jan. 24 and 26 after entry Burahod Nim Kauswagan tallied six wins and one draw.

Lim is the current leader in GCAP's 2005 Cocker of the Year race. The third leg sizzles on Monday and Wednesday.

Meanwhile, Patrick Antonio, who founded the GCAP last year, announced that the first GCAP International 8-Cock Derby will be staged at the Las Piñas Coliseum in June.



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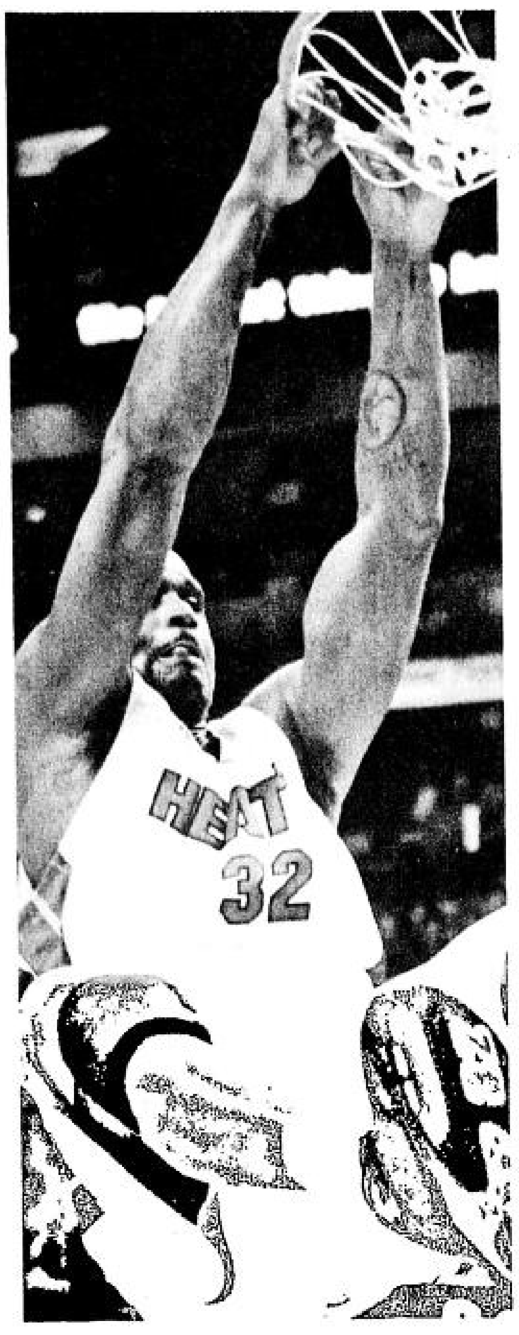
O'Neal: Phil-Kobe reunion possible



O'NEAL won't join any Lakers reunion. REUTERS

MIAMI—The prospect of coach Phil Jackson and Kobe Bryant reuniting at the Los Angeles Lakers wouldn't surprise the outcast Shaquille O'Neal.

Jackson is being mentioned as a candidate as the Lakers' coach to replace Rudy Tomjanovich, who resigned on Wednesday citing stress and health reasons.

Before his Miami Heat played the Cleveland Cavaliers on Thursday, O'Neal said he'll wish Jackson well if his old coach returns to his old job.

"I'm not surprised, because he's like the only one that's left," O'Neal said. "He knows the system. He has a relationship with the system. He'll probably get a great deal, great money and I wish him well."

O'Neal also hinted that there was more to Tomjanovich's decision than what was publicly revealed. "I know the real deal. Officer O'Neal knows it all, baby. But I won't be the first to talk about it."

After the Lakers lost last year's NBA Finals in five games to Detroit, the core that won three titles together was broken up.

Jackson resigned, and O'Neal was traded to the Heat in exchange for three players. Bryant, meanwhile, signed a $136-million, seven-year deal to remain with the Lakers.

But the soap opera didn't end there.

Bryant denied rumors that he played a role in Jackson's and O'Neal's departures; Jackson then wrote a tell-all book portraying Bryant as aloof and difficult to coach, and O'Neal refused to even speak Bryant's name in interviews leading up to their ballyhooed match-up on Christmas Day in Los Angeles.

HAMBLEN REUTERS

O'Neal said he doesn't take satisfaction from watching another circus develop around the Lakers.

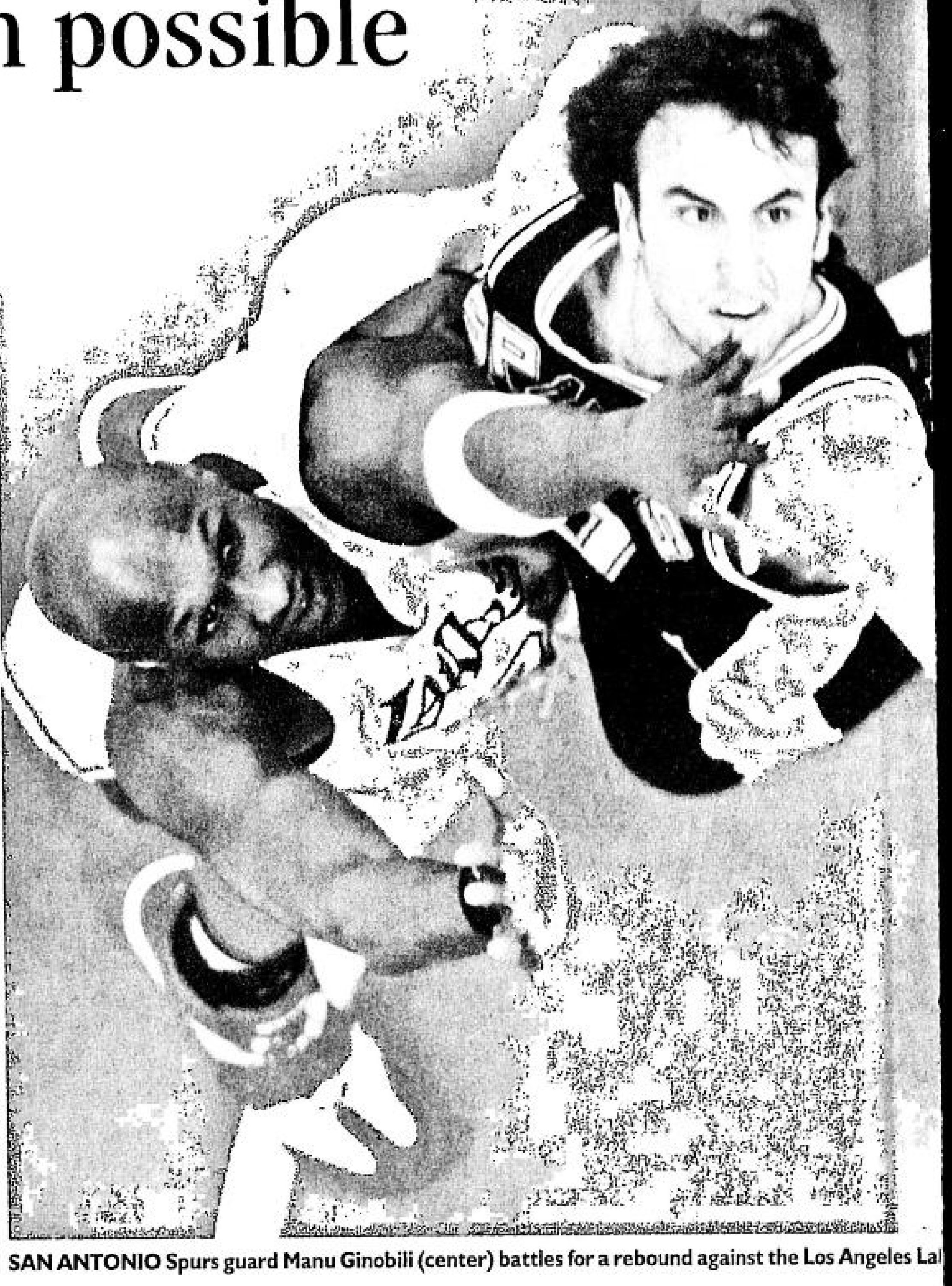
"It wasn't always like that. It's just a guy like that is the whole reason," O'Neal said. "Me being the businessman that I am, I got out at the right time. I'm in a perfect situation now. Things are going good over here and we're right on track."

While in Los Angeles, O'Neal often said Jackson would be the last coach he'd play for. But even if Jackson comes back to the Lakers, O'Neal says he's happy where he is.

"I wouldn't go back there," O'Neal said. "If Micky [Arison, the Heat's owner] sold this team and bought that team, I still wouldn't go back there and play with those people."

Tomjanovich's decision to resign, due to health reasons, left the Lakers, already playing without the injured Bryant, needing a head coach.

Assistant Frank Hamblen has taken over on an interim basis, but just before tip-off of the game between the Lakers and the San Antonio Spurs, Hamblen lobbied for Jackson's return to the team. *AP*



SAN ANTONIO Spurs guard Manu Ginobili (center) battles for a rebound against the Los Angeles La

Sir Paul promises cleaner NFL show

JACKSONVILLE, Florida—A year after the Janet Jackson debacle, the NFL has come up with the perfect way to clean up its act at halftime of the Super Bowl: Hire a British knight to entertain.

Sir Paul McCartney will be the only performer during the NFL's 12-minute extravaganza on Sunday. He promises not to cause the same furor Jackson stirred up last season when Justin Timberlake tore open her top at the end of the show and revealed her bare breast—the infamous "wardrobe malfunction."

And so, the former Beatles star has come full circle. Considered among the most edgy entertainers in the world during the 1960s, he has now become the safe choice.

"I had a slight inkling that there might be something like that attached to it," McCartney said at a news conference on Thursday. "That's OK. It's an honor to do it."

McCartney's play list—he has hundreds of songs to choose from—is a secret, although everything has been vetted and approved by the NFL to ensure he doesn't sing anything that might be offensive.

The 62-year-old icon, who was knighted in London nine years ago, joked about the possibility of exposing flesh during the halftime show.

"I can assure you I won't," McCartney said, "because I'll be naked."

Fox, which is televising the game, has opted against an eight-second delay of the telecast as a way of preventing something inappropriate from airing. Short delays on live events became much more popular in the aftermath of the Jackson affair.

"Basically, we're treating the Super Bowl as a news event," Fox spokesperson Dan Hill said. "We don't believe in tape delaying news events."

Last year, the Jackson episode prompted congressional hearings, stricter Federal Communication Commission rules, and triggered $550,000 in fines against the 20 CBS-owned stations that carried the game.

The NFL swore it would never give up control of its entertainment again. It hired producer Don Mischer, who has experience with awards shows, political conventions and a past Super Bowl.

"We're not anticipating anything" going wrong, Mischer said. *AP*

MCCARTNEY: 'I'll be naked.' AP

Parker, Du
Spurs over

LOS ANGELES—Tony Parker had 22 points and nine assists, Tim Duncan scored 17 points despite hyperextending his left knee, and the San Antonio Spurs held off the Los Angeles Lakers, 103-91, Thursday.

The game was the first for the Lakers since Rudy Tomjanovich resigned as coach, citing health concerns. Frank Hamblen, Tomjanovich's replacement, lobbied for the return of Phil Jackson before the game.

The Spurs outscored Los Angeles, 37-15, in the third quarter for an 80-55 lead, and led, 89-61, early in the fourth when the Lakers went on a 23-2 run to draw within seven points with 3:51 remaining.

But that was as close as they would get.

Duncan was injured with 8:40 left before halftime in a collision with Caron Butler, and sat out the rest of the second quarter.

Duncan started the second half and had nine points and five rebounds in the third quarter before coming out for good with 3:39 to play in the period.

"Once I took him out of the game and we had the lead, I just didn't think it would be very smart to put him back in," Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said. "He wanted to go in, he was begging me. I just thought he was too stiff.

Malik Rose had season-high totals of 19 points and 11 rebounds, and Manu Ginobili had 17 points and nine assists for the Spurs (38-10), who have won four straight and eight of nine.

Lamar Odom had 23 points and 13 rebounds for the Lakers (24-20), who missed another opportunity for a season-high three-game winning streak.

They've won consecutive games 10 times, but failed in each of those situations to win a third straight assignment.

"It just shows what we're capable of and how we can play if we get after it

NFL rushing best Smith calls it quits

JACKSONVILLE, Florida—NFL career rushing leader Emmitt Smith retired on Thursday, calling his 15-year career "a tremendous ride."

Smith helped the Dallas Cowboys win three Super Bowls in his 13 seasons with them, and spent the last two years with the Arizona Cardinals.

"I've given everything I can possible to the game, on and off the field," Smith said at a press conference.

He thanked dozens of people, and broke down several times. Tears streamed down his face as he clutched his wife's hand.

"The memories that I have, the relationships that I'm taking away from the game are something dear and something I will take with me for the rest of my life," he said. "I'm moving on to another chapter in my life and that's a chapter I'm looking forward to."

Smith said he planned to pursue some business opportunities but vowed to stay close to the game and give something back to the fans.

Cowboys owner Jerry Jones, one of the many Smith thanked through tears, gave the best reason for the long list of salutations.

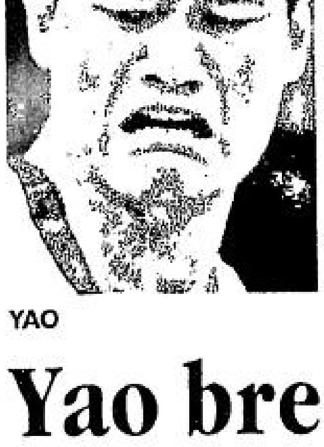
"When you've established yourself as royalty, then you have to mention everybody," Jones said. "That's the price you pay."

The 35-year-old Smith ran for 18,355 yards and 164 touchdowns in his career, both NFL records. He rushed for 937 yards and nine touchdowns for the Cardinals this season.

Smith said the Cardinals had decided not to re-sign him for next year.

"That made my decision a whole lot easier," Smith said, adding that he turned down offers to continue his career elsewhere. "I have a home. It's with my family."

He rushed for 1,000 yards or more every year from 1991 to 2001. He led the NFL in rushing in 1991, 1992, 1993 and 1995 and in touchdowns in three different seasons. *AP*



YAO

O'NEAL

HILL

Yao breaks Jordan A

NEW YORK—Yao Ming of the Houston Rockets received a record 2,558,278 votes in winning the starting spot at center for the NBA's Western Conference All-Star team for the third straight year.

He will line up alongside Minnesota's Kevin Garnett, Tim Duncan of San Antonio, the Los Angeles Lakers' Kobe Bryant and Houston's Tracy McGrady at the All-Star game on Feb. 20 in Denver.

Shaquille O'Neal's 2,488,089 votes were the second highest in All-Star history, the NBA said on Thursday in announcing the starters. The previous record was 2,451,136 for Michael Jordan of the Chicago Bulls in 1997.

Grant Hill of the Orlando Magic edged the Indiana Pacers' Jermaine O'Neal by slightly more than 65,000 votes for a starting spot on the Eastern Conference team for the 54th version of the league's showcase event.

Hill received 1,497,489 votes in fan balloting to O'Neal's 1,432,438, allowing him to join Shaquille O'Neal, Allen Iverson, Vince Carter and LeBron James as the starting five for the East.

More than 6 million votes were cast in worldwide All-Star balloting, a 14-percent increase from a year ago.

Shaquille O'Neal will be a starter for the first time since 2002 after being outpolled by China's Yao the past two years when both were in the

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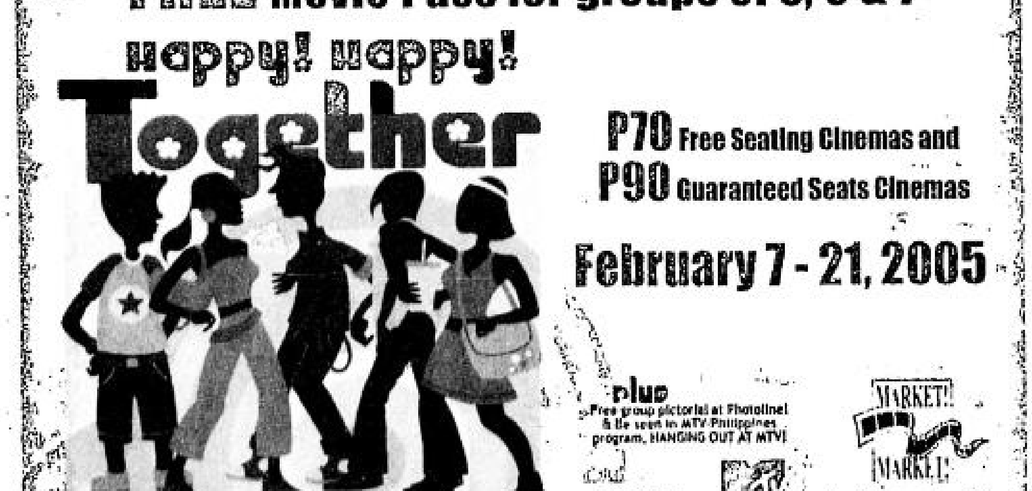

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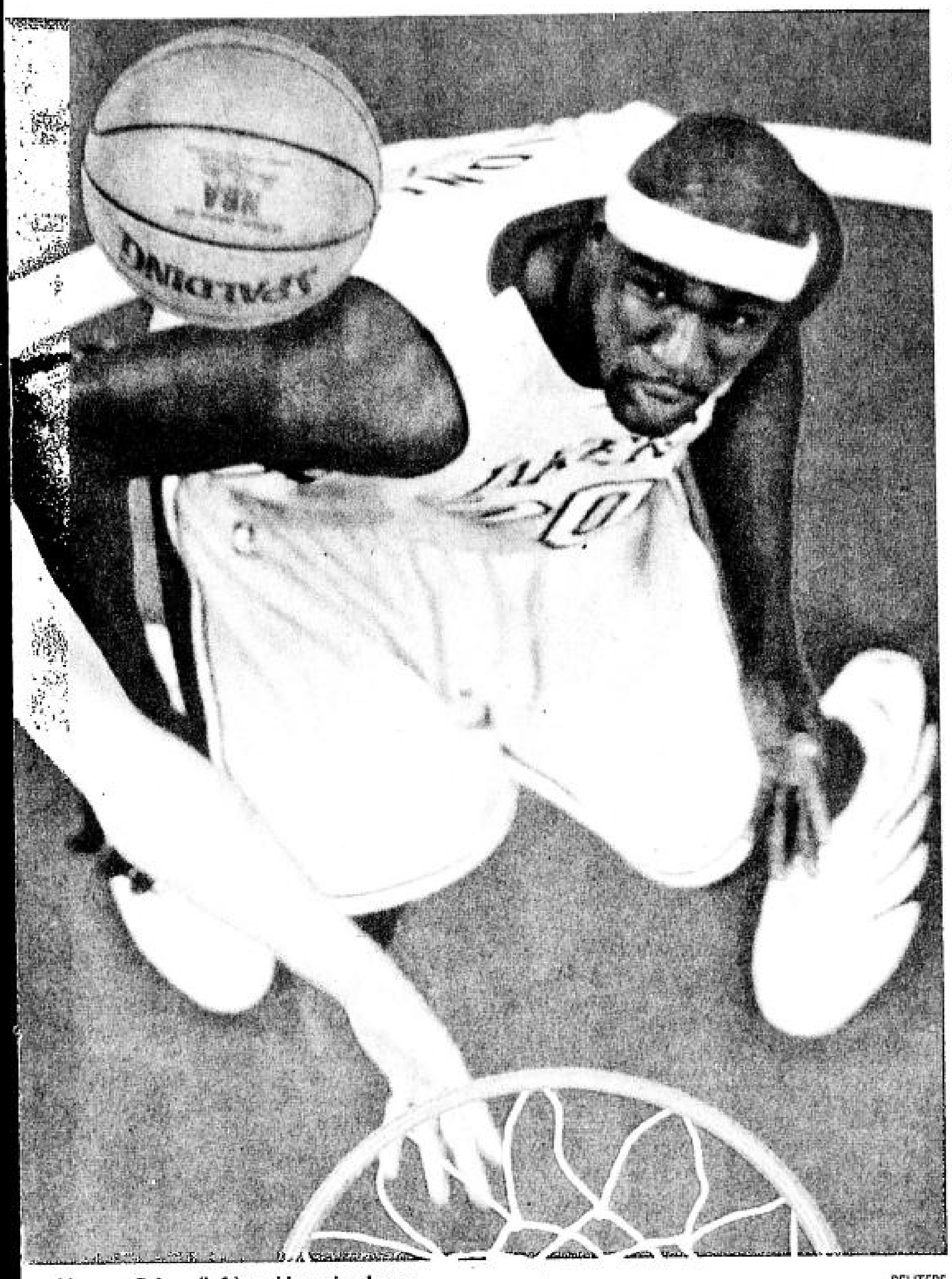


kers' Lamar Odom (left) and Jumaine Jones. REUTERS

Monty eyes slot among best

MELBOURNE, Australia—Colin Montgomerie recalls an opportunity lost—when he had a chance to become the world's No. 1 golfer.

Montgomerie needed to win the Scottish Open in 1996 at Loch Lomond and top-ranked Greg Norman had to miss the cut in an American tournament he was playing in.

"He didn't, I didn't, and Tiger Woods was born," Montgomerie joked after his 6-under 65 Friday left him tied for the second-round lead with Australian Peter Lonard at the Heineken Classic.

"That ended my run. It has been downhill ever since."

Montgomerie, after a very public divorce last year which affected his play, said he's ready for another shot at the top.

His ranking at the end of 2004 slid to 82. Montgomerie finished in first place in the European Order of Merit for seven straight years beginning in 1993.

After a second-place finish last week at the Caltex Masters in Singapore, and some strong play here at Royal Melbourne, Monty looks the part.

Now slimmer by about 16 kg (35 lb), he's already moved up seven spots in the rankings toward his goal of getting back into the top 25 by the end of 2005.

And after his first tournament, he led the European Tour in fairways and greens hit in regulation.

"That's what I used to do—seven years in a row I led those categories without any question," Montgomerie said. "For the last three or four years, I haven't, and that's what caused the problem. If I hit the fairways, I am going to hit the greens."

Montgomerie said his problem was a back ailment, and that the weight loss has helped.

MONTGOMERIE: 'And then Tiger Woods was born' REUTERS

"I have not been able to swing," he said. "I spent the last three years, every day, coming out on the range and having a different swing to accommodate one's physical problems. My swing changed day to day.

"For the last few months, it hasn't. I have gone back to the way I used to swing in the '90s. It was good enough then and hopefully it is proving itself here."

Montgomerie says his golf is good because his life off the course is in the same category.

"I have never been happier in my life, on or off the course, than right now," said Montgomerie. "My golf's good, I'm happy at home. There's nothing that can affect me at this stage.

"You can print what you want, lads, but you have to say that Monty is actually quite happy right now."

Which, inevitably, brought the question about Montgomerie never having won a major championship.

He admitted he'd be "happy, very happy" if he finished his career without a major.

"I'd be happier if I had one, but very happy without," said Montgomerie. "I'm so thrilled that Phil Mickelson won that major (the 2004 US Masters).

"That makes me the best player never to have won one. It is much better than being the second-best player never to have won one."

FBR Open

Meanwhile, in Scottsdale, Arizona, Dudley Hart was the best at conquering a treacherous wind at the FBR Open through a slow, difficult first round that was suspended by darkness with 45 players still on the course on Thursday.

Hart was the leader in the clubhouse at 4-under 67, one shot better than Stewart Cink and Hunter Mahan.

Vijay Singh was one of three at even-par 71, and Phil Mickelson was 2 over through 16 holes.

John Daly shot a 10-over 81, then withdrew, citing illness. *AP*

ncan carry LA Lakers

a little bit," said Odom.

Heat 100, Cavaliers 88

In Miami, Shaquille O'Neal had 26 points and 12 rebounds as Miami overcame 31 points and 10 assists from All-Star LeBron James to beat the Cavaliers.

O'Neal, named an All-Star for the 12th time earlier in the day, scored eight points in the fourth quarter to help the Eastern Conference-leading Heat send Cleveland to its fourth loss in five road games.

Eddie Jones added 22 points and Dwyane Wade scored 20 for the Heat, who improved to 12-2 following a loss.

James, who, at 20, is the second-youngest player to be named a starter in All-Star history, made 11 of 23 shots for Cleveland, which has lost two straight for the first time since Dec. 18, 2004. The Cavaliers had won eight in a row following a loss.

Zydrunas Ilgauskas had 23 points and Drew Gooden had 10 points and 12 rebounds—his sixth straight double-double—for the Cavaliers, who fell 1½ games behind idle Detroit in the Central Division.

Clippers 106, Grizzlies 103

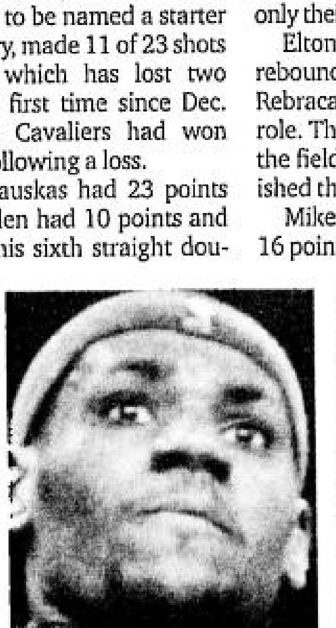
In Memphis, Tennessee, Bobby Simmons scored seven of his 26 points in the final three minutes and finished 10-of-12 from the field in the Los Angeles Clippers' comeback victory over Memphis.

Marko Jaric added 25 points and six assists to help the Clippers win their third straight and snap a seven-game losing streak against the Grizzlies.

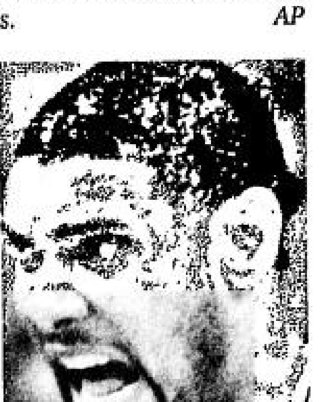
Memphis' Brian Cardinal missed a desperation shot from beyond midcourt at the buzzer, sending the Grizzlies to only their second loss in seven games.

Elton Brand had 17 points and 11 rebounds for Los Angeles, and Zeljeko Rebraca added 14 points in a reserve role. The Clippers were 11-of-14 from the field in the fourth quarter and finished the game at 60 percent.

Mike Miller led the Grizzlies with 16 points. *AP*



JAMES



DUNCAN

ll-Star voting record

Western Conference.

"If you look at how he got all those votes, it's not difficult," O'Neal said. "You can't compete with that, because where he's from, there's a billion people. I don't know how many people there [are] where I'm from. All them billions probably love him over there. They don't love me over there."

James, the Cleveland Cavaliers' 20-year-old phenomenon, will be the only first-time All-Star among the 10 starters. Shaquille O'Neal was selected to his 12th All-Star team, Garnett to his eighth; Bryant, Duncan and Hill to their seventh, Carter and Iverson to their sixth, and McGrady to his fifth.

Hill, sidelined for most of the past three seasons after undergoing four surgical procedures on his troublesome left ankle, was selected an All-Star for the first time since 2001.

"It's amazing. I haven't expected any of this. I was just trying to concentrate on coming in and being healthy and not judging myself or looking at any personal goals," Hill said. "I've been a little shocked at all this, all the love and attention—and I'm thankful for it.

Jermaine O'Neal, a starter for the East All-Stars a year ago, missed 15 games earlier this season after being suspended for his part in a brawl with Detroit fans at a November Pacers-Pistons game. He is averaging 26.2 points and 9.3 rebounds. *AP*

Spinks' homecoming a blockbuster

ST. LOUIS—Undisputed world welterweight boxing champion Cory Spinks has turned out to be a much bigger drawing card in his hometown than promoters envisioned for his fight against Zab Judah on Saturday.

Savvis Center general manager Dennis Petrullo said he'd have been happy with a crowd of 14,000 or 15,000 for Spinks' title rematch against Judah. Instead, all 20,655 tickets have been sold.

"That's the greatest thing any promoter could hope for," promoter Don King said on Thursday. "If the light ain't shining in St. Louis, it ain't shining nowhere."

Spinks, son of former heavyweight champion Leon Spinks, grew up on St. Louis' rough north side and still lives in suburban St. Charles. Spinks and his trainer, Dennis Cunningham, have long wanted a fight in the city.

"It's just a blessing to finally come here and defend my title," Spinks said. "I'd like to thank Zab for taking this risk."

Spinks, who decisioned Judah in April in Las Vegas, said he'll win the battle of left-handers again. Spinks is 34-2 with 11 knockouts; Judah, who has won two fights since the loss to Spinks, is 32-2 with 23 knockouts and is a former junior welterweight champion.

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CORY Spinks (right) poses with Zab Judah and promoter Don King. AP

"I'm not the champion for nothing. I'm not ready to lose my belt," Spinks said.

This came after some tough talk from Judah, who knocked down Spinks in the 12th and final round of the first meeting in Las Vegas. In typical overstatement, King characterized Judah, of New York, as an imposing invader along the likes of Genghis Khan, Alexander the Great and Darth Vader. *AP*

Windy City blows down Sosa icon

CHICAGO—In the good old days, all Sammy Sosa had to do was hop and the Wrigley Field faithful dissolved in delirium.

The venerable ballpark rocked with chants of "SAM-MEE! SAM-MEE!" every time he hit one of his monstrous home runs, and the Dominican was greeted like royalty when he raced out to right field. Chicago was starved for a superstar after Michael Jordan left, and it embraced Sosa heartily.

But the love affair was surprisingly brief and, despite the full-page ads Sosa took out in the local papers on Thursday to say thank you, the breakup was ugly. Unfathomable to see him in anything but a blue Cubs uniform five years ago, Sosa now sports a Baltimore Orioles jersey. And Cubs fans were not only OK with that, many heartily approved.

"I think it was best for the team," said Dustin Johnson, a Cubs fan. "We don't want to see 60-homer seasons. We want to see winning seasons."

Sosa's falling numbers and his spats with teammates and manager Dusty Baker turned fans against him. In a Chicago Tribune poll this week, 76 percent said the Cubs were better off without Sosa.

"I feel sad that it had to end the way that it did," Cubs general manager Jim Hendry said.

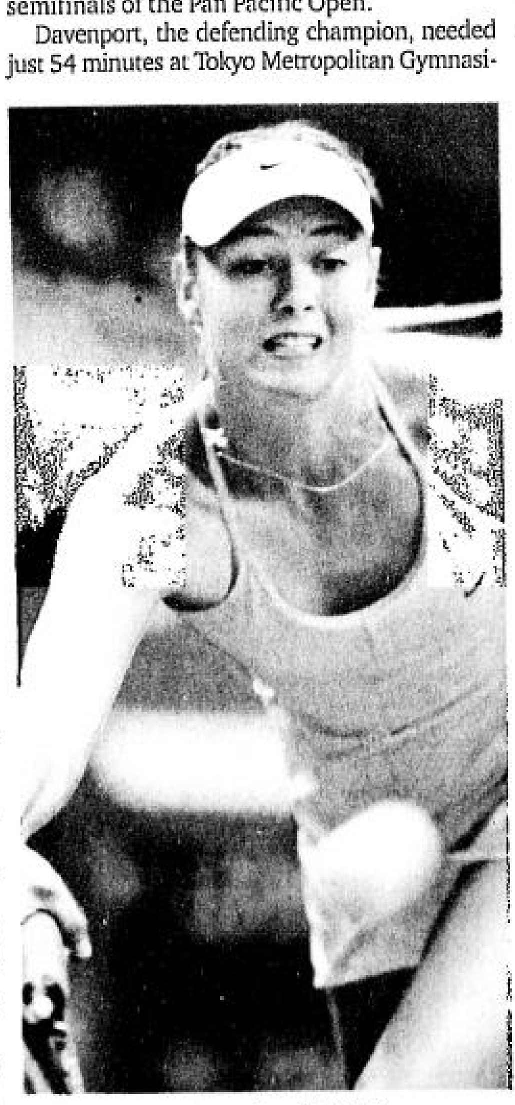
Sosa's rise came at a time when the Windy City—and baseball—needed him most. The Bulls had just won the last of their six NBA titles, Jordan was gone and none of the city's other teams were doing anything to draw attention. The Cubs were pitiful as usual, and Major League Baseball was still reeling from the bitter 1994-95 strike.

"I always said I wanted to finish my career in Chicago," Sosa said on Wednesday. "But just like a marriage, sometimes you've got to get a divorce." *AP*

Lindsay, Maria gain semis

TOKYO—Top-ranked Lindsay Davenport overpowered Iveta Benesova of the Czech Republic in straight sets Friday to advance to the semifinals of the Pan Pacific Open.

Davenport, the defending champion, needed just 54 minutes at Tokyo Metropolitan Gymnasium en route to a 6-1, 6-2 win over Benesova.



WIMBLEDON champion Maria Sharapova of Russia returns a shot to compatriot Elena Likhovtseva during her Pan Pacific Open quarterfinal tennis match in Tokyo Feb. 4. Sharapova won, 6-3, 6-3. REUTERS

"You never know on this surface what's going to happen," said Davenport, losing finalist at last week's Australian Open. "But she threw in a lot of errors and that made the match even shorter."

She said she knows things will get tougher in the semis, where Davenport will meet US Open champion Svetlana Kuznetsova of Russia, a 7-6 (4), 7-6 (4) winner over Daniela Hantuchova of Slovakia.

"Hopefully with all the tennis I've played in the last three weeks I'll be able to raise my level appropriately," said Davenport, who lost last weekend's Australian Open final to Serena Williams.

Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova defeated fellow Russian Elena Likhovtseva, 6-3, 6-3, to book her place in the final four of the $1.3-million event.

She'll face Japan's Shinobu Asagoe in Saturday's semifinals. Asagoe downed Russia's Elena Dementieva, 6-3, 6-4.

Second-seeded Sharapova faced little resistance in a lopsided win over sixth-seeded Likhovtseva.

"I started off well," said Sharapova. "I tried to put pressure on her and was able to take control of the points on her serves."

Sharapova opened up a 4-1 lead in the second set before Likhovtseva rallied to make it 4-3 when she broke the 17-year-old Russian in the seventh game.

Sharapova broke back in the next game and then closed out, finishing with a crosscourt backhand to win in 1 hour, six minutes.

Sharapova said she's enjoying the challenge of being one of the highest-ranked players on the women's tour.

"It's harder to stay in the top five than to get there," said Sharapova. "Everyone wants to beat you, but I'm prepared for that and I enjoy the challenge when people want to beat you."

In Vina del Mar, Chile, French Open winner Gaston Gaudio of Argentina beat former champion David Sanchez of Spain, 6-4, 6-2, to reach the quarterfinals of the BellSouth Open on Thursday. *AP*

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Muros raring to relive glory in SEA Games

THE LAST time Filipino track and field athletes came up with a double-digit gold-medal production was in the 1985 Bangkok Southeast Asian Games when the RP athletics team led by Elma Muros-Posadas scooped up 10 gold medals.

That was one gold short of the 11 brought home by Lydia De Vega-Mercado and Co. from the 1983 Singapore SEA Games campaign, the biggest by the country since RP joined the biennial meet in 1977.

Now comes the good news that Elma is raring to come out of retirement and carry the national colors in this year's Manila SEA Games.

This was confirmed yesterday by Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association president Go Teng Kok who expressed elation over Elma's plan.

"Elma had just come from Bangkok where she won, I think, three gold medals in the Masters meet there," Go said. "*Marami daw ang nagsabi sa kanya na kaya pa niya kung SEA Games lang.*"

"I told her, *kung puwede pa siya*, why not? But like all others, she has to take part in the Open to qualify," Go emphasized.

Go said Elma had told him she was willing to waive the athlete's allowance for as long as she got training uniforms and is allowed to compete again.

"Elma is a fighter. *Pag sinabi niyang laban, laban talaga siya.* I think she is still the best in heptathlon among her SEA Games counterparts," Go said.

As this developed, Go made a bold announcement that his athletes, known as GTK's Army, will be out to score a record gold-medal haul in this year's Manila Games.

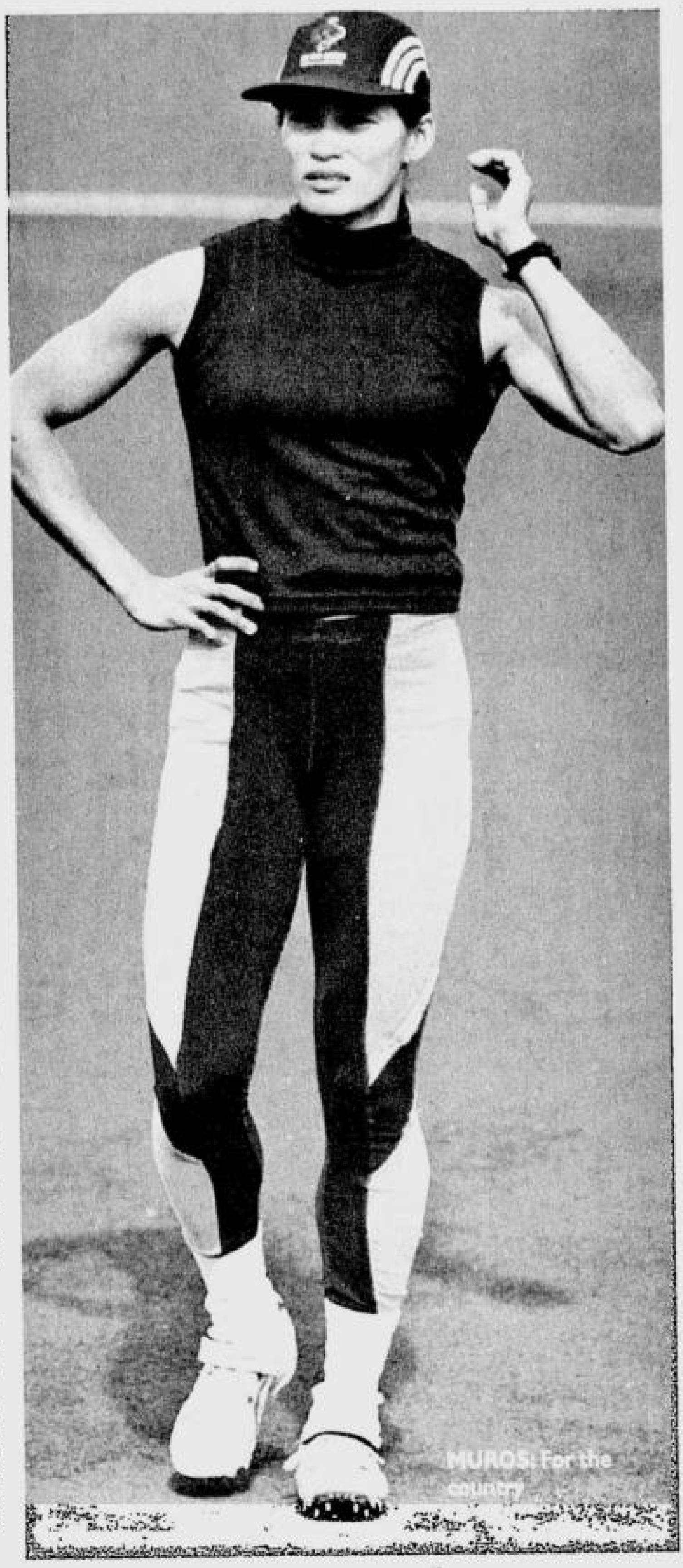
Go said, with the support his team is getting and the international exposure lined up by his association prior to the Games, his Army is capable of wining from 13 to 15 gold medals.

"Our main sponsor, of course, is Pagcor, which pledged its support during the pledging session conducted by the First Gentleman Foundation. Lately, we also got San Miguel Corp. on our side," the Patafa president disclosed in yesterday's SCOOP Sa Kamayan weekly session.

"While before, we had been exposing our athletes to our Southeast Asian neighbors, now we can send them to a higher-level competitions and training in China, Japan and Korea," Go said.

Plan is also afoot to send several members of the 30-man national athletics team to the United States and Europe.

Go said the coming National Open will be the final phase of a selection process lined up by Patafa to determine the official composition of the national squad.



MUROS: For the country

Wrestling, 3 other NSAs face trouble

By Marc Anthony Reyes

TROUBLE is brewing in four national sports associations.

Despite the windfall generated by the friends of First Gentleman Mike Arroyo and the new leadership in the country's top sports bodies, Philippine sports simply failed to enjoy a honeymoon period as controversies ensued anew in basketball, badminton, billiards and wrestling.

Wrestling became the latest of among distressed NSAs as Vietnam Southeast Asian Games double gold winner Marcus Valda sought the help of POC president Peping Cojuangco yesterday regarding officials of the Wrestling Association of the Philippines whom he blamed for, among other things, the absence of a wrestling "godfather."

The 23-year-old Valda, a nephew of the First Gentleman himself, said he represented his fellow national wrestlers who merely "wanted to ask why nothing is done for the plight of the team."

Wrestling is one of the nine NSAs which didn't get a godfather, but was subsequently "adopted" by San Miguel Corporation as it pledged P100 million of the P150 million raised during the fund-drive.

Still, Valda claimed that there was not a single foreign exposure for the national team last year which "robbed us of a year in preparation" considering that the sport brought to the country 11 medals, including four golds, during the 2003 SEA Games.

Valda, a fifth year sports and recreation management student at La Salle, added that WAP president Vince Piccio even threatened to pull all the wrestling events out of the coming SEAG here after they confronted him and other WAP officials.

Piccio and WAP chair Col. Noli Espejo refused to comment and did not allow access to sportswriters who tried to cover the confrontation at the WAP offices inside the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.

Also included in the grapplers' gripes was the decision of WAP not to contest the exclusion of Greco-Roman events where the country has strong chances of winning. "We won eight golds in the 2002 SEA Games championships and four of them came from Greco-Roman, imagine how much better we can perform in the SEA Games," said Valda.

He said the WAP officials failed to answer their questions and even made "demeaning remarks" to some of the nationals who happen to be military enlisted men.

There was also unrest in billiards and snooker as secretary general Joaquin Perez de Tagle reportedly asked for a change of leadership in the association headed by Ernie Fajardo.

Sources said De Tagle had a falling out with Fajardo regarding policies in the association, and is now pushing for the election of Sen. Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan as president and actor Aga Muhlach as one of the officials.

Badminton recently came out of the controversial resignation of national coach Valentin "Butch" Oreta, who claimed the Philippine Badminton Association board meddled with his program.

PBA president and former First Lady Ming Ramos, however, assured that the national team remains intact and a tryout will be conducted to finalize the RP lineup for the SEA Games.

Basketball Association of the Philippines is also smarting over the resignation of nine national women players and their coaches.

It's official: Keon RP training director for 2005 SEA Games

KEON

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE TALENT is OK, but the system needs some fixing.

This was the initial assessment of former Gintong Alay chief Mike Keon yesterday as he formally accepted the offer by the Philippine Sports Commission to become the training director of Filipino athletes competing in the Southeast Asian Games this November.

"If everything is done properly, we can win the overall championship," said the 50-year-old Keon, who spearheaded the Gintong Alay project that flourished during the early '80s with the presence of legends like Elma Muros-Posadas, Isidro del Prado and Lydia de Vega-Mercado, who has been named liaison for athletes.

Unlike before, Keon said athletes now are assertive of their rights and the NSAs sensitive to monitoring teams, especially those coming from the PSC.

"I will go directly to the athletes, observe the training, coaches, programs and equipment and make recommendations to the Philippine Olympic Committee," said Keon of his new job. "But it is all up to the NSAs to follow the recommendations."

Keon, wearing a long mane that defines a resemblance to Hollywood actor Robert de Niro, said he has mellowed through the years compared with the time when he was the one and only boss of RP sports, being the concurrent Gintong Alay chief and POC president.

"The winds of time have smoothened my jagged personality," said Keon, who pointed out that the country is running out of time in preparation.

He said he will immediately meet up with POC president Peping Cojuangco to get down to business.

Keon left the country during the People Power uprising in 1986 but came back a few years later to guide Ilocos Norte's athletic programs through the help of his cousin Gov. Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr.

2 ex-nationals named karatedo coaches

TWO former national team members were recently appointed by Philippine Karatedo Federation (PKF) president Eduardo Ponce to reinforce the coaching staff of the national team to the coming Southeast Asian Games.

They are Juan Carlos (Chino) Veguillas, a former SEA Games gold medalist and WKF World Cup silver medalist who was appointed as kata and kumite coach, and kumite coach Ma. Victoria Pabillore, a former national team member from Cagayan de Oro City and bronze medalist in the Hiroshima Friendship Games. They are to coach in their respective PKF designated satellite training areas at the AAK SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City and at the YDKA gym in Cagayan de Oro City.

Noting the declining performance of the karate team in its recent international stints, Ponce decided to fill in two of the vacant slots in the coaching staff of karatedo.

In the 1991 SEA Games, karatedo was allotted five coaches by then chair Cecil Hechanova.

Karatedo at that time garnered five gold medals for the Philippines.

"I strongly feel that the addition of these two well experienced coaches will greatly enhance our chances in the coming Southeast Asian Games which we will be hosting," said Ponce. "Several national team members have already been training with good results under these two coaches," added Ponce.

Phone Pals vent ire on court, rout Kings

From page A25

that the forfeiture had been decided with finality.

"On several issues, the board is always divided. There are 11 different positions including that of the commissioner but ultimately the interest of the league will always prevail," he added.

Talk 'N Text management, in a statement, said it is "extremely disappointed and frustrated" with the decision of the league.

Frustration

The Phone Pals simply vented their frustration on the hard court, forging the most lopsided Finals victory since Alaska routed San Miguel, 99-61, in Game 6 of the All-Filipino Cup.

Though still trailing the series at 1-2, the Phone Pals will be entering Game 4 tomorrow with renewed confidence, hoping to duplicate their 2003 AFC feat, where they crawled out of a similar 0-2 hole to beat Coca-Cola and capture the title.

"But I don't want to think about that," said a cautious Banal. "We would rather do it one game at a time."

The Phone Pals waxed hot right at the start, taking a 12-0 lead before Victor Pablo, Miller and Alapag made it 54-32 at halftime.

Fans speak out

Meanwhile, Taulava's fans club spoke up against the decision to bar the cager, saying that the championship was "robbed of its luster."

"Even Ginebra fans do not want Game 1 to be awarded to them by Eala," said fans club president Beng Bonus. "They want the Kings to win on the hardcourt."

The scores:

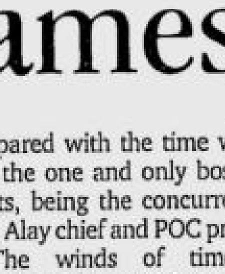
TALK 'N TEXT 102—Miller 25, Alapag 17, Belano 12, De Ocampo 11, Telan 10, Pablo 10, Salangsang 8, Camaso 4, Ravena 3, Gelig 2, Fran 0.

GINEBRA 66—Caguioa 14, Menk 14, Santos 10, Salvacion 9, Wallkvist 8, Dimaunahan 7, Adducul 2, Seigle 2, Valenzuela 0, Noble 0, Ballesteros 0.

Quarters: 25-12, 54-32, 79-51, 102-66.

Grand Lady of golf

SPECTATOR



Al S. Mendoza

ALICE Andrada never runs out of surprises. Dubbed the Grand Lady of Philippine golf, Alice will have Jayvie Agojo as her top attraction when she stages anew the Southern Ladies Open in Cagayan de Oro City on Feb. 16-19.

"You know, we always want the best, so the best is with us again," Alice said. "Jayvie is simply the hottest female golfer today and her stint in our Southern Ladies Open makes our tournament as prestigious as ever."

A director of the National Golf Association of the Philippines for so long now, Alice it is who oversees yearly the holding of the Southern Ladies Open, undisputedly the most challenging lady golf event organized by the NGAP and held only outside of Luzon. Since the tournament's inception in 1963, every Southern Ladies Open commanded national attention. That's because traditionally, the nation's top female golfers virtually make it a must to join the event.

You talk of the game's stars both of today and yesterday, they've all seen action in the Southern Ladies Open. Many of them were winners but not after going through tough times amid mind-boggling situations triggered mostly by fierce battles down the stretch. Sonia Tugot. Dominga Capati. Grace Ebalde. Ruby Chico. Mary Grace Estuesta. Yvette de Leon. Jamille Jose. Carmelette Villaroman. Lina de Guzman. Heidi Chua. Lora Roberto. And, yes, Jennifer Rosales. Champions all.

You talk of the best and the brightest, they've all played in the Southern Ladies Open.

If the Philippine Ladies Open is a test of character, the Southern Ladies Open is a battle of guts.

In the Philippine Ladies Open, you play to win. In the Southern Ladies Open, you play to survive.

I'm sure Jayvie Agojo will instantly draw the crowds in Cagayan de Oro City when play starts at the swanky Pueblo de Oro on Feb. 16 in the 42nd year of the Southern Ladies Open. For one, Jayvie has just won the Philippine Ladies Open. For another, she followed that up with a stunning victory in the Nick Faldo Hong Kong International Open 21-and-under series.

At 18, Jayvie has virtually captured all the major titles in town, including her victories last year in the Manila Ladies Cup at Wack Wack and the Samsung Amateur Tour in Cebu.

Jayvie is just about the best thing that ever happened in Philippine golf since Jennifer Rosales. And even if Jayvie is set to leave for America in August for a golf scholarship at Pepperdine University, she will be back to play for the country in the SEA Games in November.

The resurgence of golf in the country has become very pronounced anew, what with recent victories scored overseas both by our male and female golfers. This happy development has already drawn the robust support of many giant companies in the land. In this regard, may I tip my hat off to DHL Worldwide Express, WWW Express, Petron Corp., Gopez Corp., DPC Yellow Pages, Hans Brumann International Jeweller, Master Sports Corp., Globe Telecommunication, HSBC-Mabuhay Miles Visa, Rep. Lala Santos (1st District, Cotabato) and Mizuno for supporting the Southern Ladies Open.

"The Southern Ladies Open has become so unique in that it has become almost a magnet that draws our female golfers from all over the archipelago to converge in the South," said Alice. "While competition has remained keen through the years, the friendly atmosphere is never lost in the din of spirited play among our competitors. The fun brought on by the bonding we have every year is a treasure that can never be warped by time."

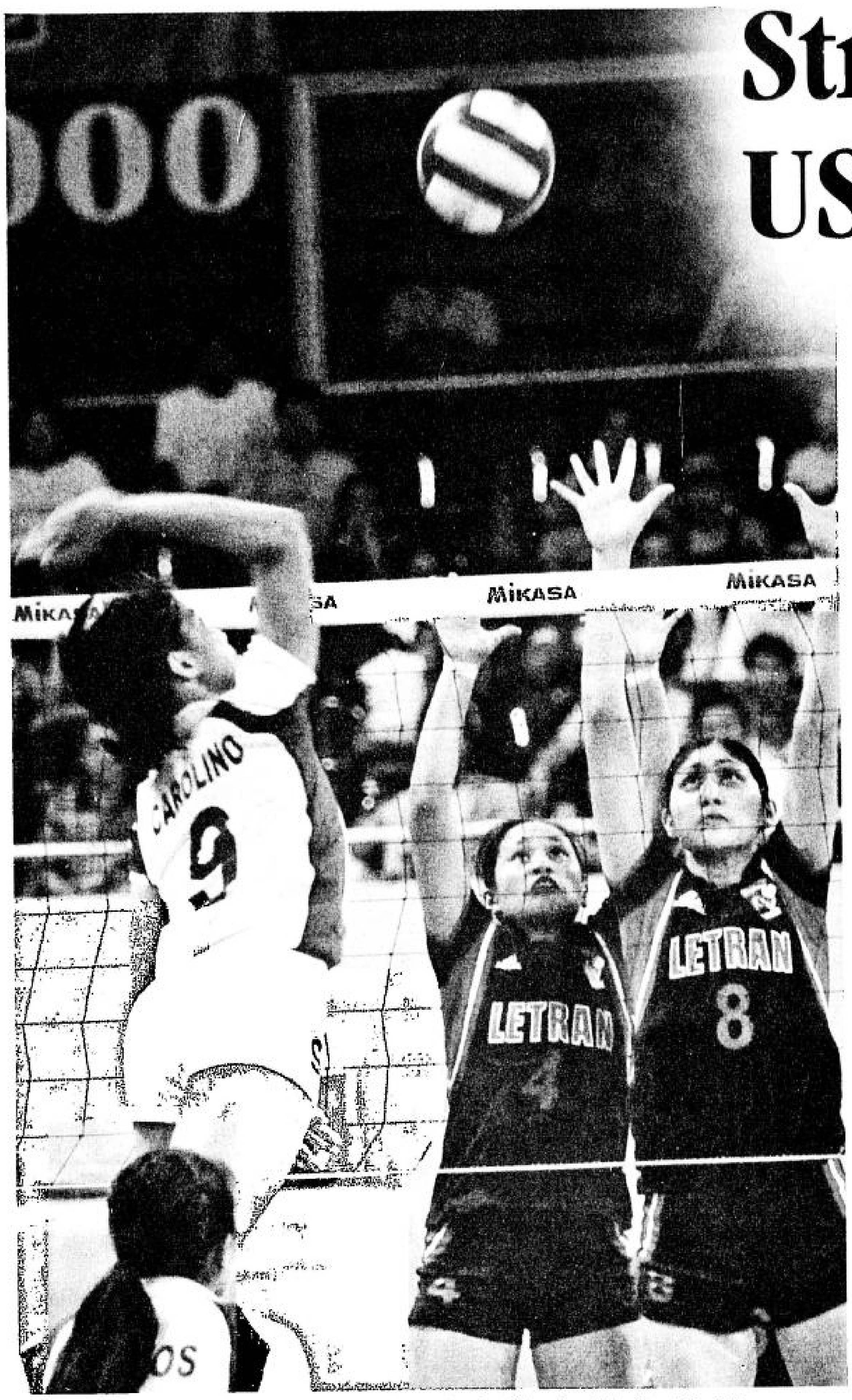
To the eternal thrill of Alice, I heard that Annette Mendoza, president of Pueblo de Oro Ladies Chapter, and Rudy Meñez, Pueblo de Oro president, are set to lay out the red carpet welcome to the participants, which include Jayvie Agojo's main challengers—Villaroman, Roberto, Tracy Locsin and, yes, Anya Tanpinco.

"Here's looking forward anew to a happy and successful Southern Ladies Open," said Alice. "I can't wait to see it blast off from the first tee."

This Alice of ours is quite apart from Alice of Wonderland.

She's more real than reel.

Streaking La Salle, UST aim for Finals



MICHELLE Carolino of La Salle elevates for a spike against April Sanchez (No. 4) and Khristine Basco (No. 8) of Letran during their semifinal clash. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

THE BIG crowd that packed the Rizal Coliseum last Thursday to watch the Shakey's V-League semifinal duels between La Salle and Letran on one side and the UST-PSC clash on the other went home happy and satisfied.

But they haven't seen the best of them yet.

With defending champion University of Santo Tomas and streaking La Salle all out to finish off their respective rivals and forge a much-awaited title rematch, fans—from mere spectators to avid supporters—are expected to troop to the venue anew in anticipation of another pair of top-notch action in this event sponsored by Shakey's Pizza.

"Due to the huge crowd that turned out today (Thursday), I'm sure that more fans would come out if UST and La Salle indeed meet in the finals," said Jun Bernardino, president of the organizing Sports Vision Management Group Inc. (SVMGI).

"But of course, it's not yet over because we expect PSC and Letran to come back strong," added Bernardino.

Truly, fans packed the upper and lower box seats with some spilling over to the gallery section for the first time this conference. Majority were delighted to see the Tigresses and the Lady Archers hurdle their respective Final Four opponents.

"Believe me, after this season, women's volleyball would have gone a long way. Before, only a handful of people watch the games but lately, even on Sundays, we now have a pretty good crowd, especially when La Salle and UST play," said SVMGI chair Mauricio "Moying" Martelino.

GAMES TOMORROW
(*Rizal Memorial Coliseum*)
1 p.m.—UST vs PSC
3 p.m.—La Salle vs Letran

Back-to-back UAAP titlist La Salle, on a 12-game roll since losing to UST in the opener last November, shackled Letran in straight sets, 25-20, 25-17, 25-16.

In contrast, UST engaged PSC into another five-setter—their third in the conference—before emerging the winner again, 25-21, 23-25, 24-26, 25-16, 15-10.

Those victories put the collegiate rivals closer to arranging another best-of-three finals showdown in this meet co-presented by Dunkin Donuts, HBC Home of Beauty Exclusives, Smart and PLDT with Mikasa and Accel as official volleyball and outfitter, respectively.

"Whoever blinks loses," said UST mentor August Sta. Maria, who is expected to again lean on the power-hitting Roxanne Pimentel.

St. Jude, PMI share top as Cusa volley heats up

ST. JUDE College and Philippine Maritime Institute posted similar straight sets victories to share the lead in the 10th Colleges and Universities Sports Association (CUSA) volleyball tournament at the Trinity College-QC Gym.

The defending champion Crusaders clobbered Metro Manila College, 25-12, 25-20, 25-13, while the Admirals whipped Technological Institute of the Philippines, 25-14, 25-18, 25-19. Both were undefeated in three games.

Central Colleges of the Philippines, De La Salle-Araneta University and Trinity also hurdled their respective assignments to share second spot with 2-1 cards. CCP walloped De Ocampo Memorial College, 25-11, 25-19, 25-21; DLS-AU trounced Las Piñas College, 25-23, 25-6, 25-14; and TCQC edged Philippine College of Criminology, 25-19, 23-25, 20-25, 25-14, 15-6. The Lady Crusaders also continued to roll over the opposition in the distaff side.

The reigning women's champion made short work of TIP, 25-12, 25-13, 25-11, to gain solo leadership at 3-0 as erstwhile co-leader PMI took a bye.

In other women's matches, CCP defeated PCCr, 25-14, 25-13, 25-7; and TIP beat World Citi Colleges, 25-11, 25-18, 22-25, 25-15.*Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

Griffins, Generals forge NCRAA cage title battle

THE COLEGIO de San Lorenzo Griffins survived Rizal Technological University Technocrats, 115-109, in triple-overtime yesterday in the 12th National Capital Region Athletic Association (NCRAA) men's basketball tournament at the Pasay Sports Complex.

Jeffrey Lim broke the Technocrats' will to fight with his split freethrow with 29.5 seconds to go, enabling the Griffins to set up a showdown with the waiting Emilio Aguinaldo College Generals.

RTU coach Loreto Tolentino conceded the game with still 9.7 seconds left and after the Technocrats bungled their two last chances to catch up with the Griffins.

His handshake with mentor Jojo Castillo sealed the destiny of the Griffins, who will now meet the Generals in a best-of-three championship starting on Monday.

The Griffins could have won the game in regulation. The score stood at 79-all when hotshot Ken Rivera hurt his left ankle when he crashed into Ian Bencito while going for a drive with four ticks to go.

Chito Jaime banged in two freethrows with 1.2 seconds to go to force a second overtime, 91-all.

Rommel Galvez drove off William Badley's pass with 2.2 seconds remaining, allowing the Griffins to extend the contest for a third time at 105-all.

Jaime shot a game-high 33 points for the Griffins, who were fourth last season.

The Technocrats sent the match into a rubber match after beating the Griffins, 90-87, last Wednesday.

The Griffins were enjoying a 78-66 advantage going into the last 4:35 of the final period when the Technocrats rallied via the hot hands of Bencito and Alexander Bower, whose lay-up with 11 seconds left tied the match at 79-all.

John Gran fired 19 points, including a pair of outside shots with 4:35 to go which gave the Griffins a 12-point spread in the fourth.

The scores:

CDSL 115—Jaime 33, Gran 19, Lim 17, Galvez 14, Manansala 10, Rivera 8, Malig 5, Badley 4.

RTU 109—Bower 34, Mellejor 17, Magbanua 15, Arcusa 13, Navarro 5, Juanday 2, Corcolon 2, Kintanar 0, Tadena 0.

Halftime: 43-all, 79-all (regulation), 91-all (first OT), 105-all (second OT).

St. Stephen five stays unbeaten

GAMES TODAY (*Chiang Kai Shek Gym*)
4:30 p.m.—Chiang Kai Shek vs Xavier School
6 p.m.—St. Stephen High vs Hope Christian

DEFENDING champion St. Stephen High School remained unscathed in seven games as it barged into the semifinals of the 29th Hitachi-Metro Manila Tiong Lian Basketball League at the Chiang Kai Shek Gym.

St. Stephen High reasserted its supremacy over last year's runner-up Xavier School, 93-88, and prevailed anew over Uno High School, 71-67, in this tournament sponsored by Hitachi and supported by And1, Hang Ten, Healthy Options and Davies Paints.

Lawrence Wu proved himself a big factor behind St. Stephen's domination as he drilled in 26 points against Xavier School and again led his team with 18 points against Uno High School.

Xavier School and Uno High likewise barged into the semifinals following crucial triumphs against separate rivals.

Xavier, now 4-2, gained a seat into the next round via a 59-50 triumph over Hope Christian School while Uno High banked on Charlie Ongto and Andrei Tanlo, who chipped in 16 and 14 points, respectively, to post a 62-60 squeaker over host Chiang Kai Shek High School.

Highlights of the games will be aired over IBC-13 on Sunday, 3-5 p.m.

Hope Christian School and Chiang Kai Shek, tied with identical 1-5 cards, will dispute the last berth into the semifinals which will commence Monday, Feb. 7.

Plyosports offers summer workouts

THE PROGRAM used by the world's best athletes is now available in the country through Plyosports, which uses the Frappier Acceleration Sports Training module, and is now offering summer workouts.

The program was devised by exercise physiologist John Frappier and is the same one used by the likes of Tracy McGrady, Vince Carter, Ron Artest and tennis star Tim Henman.

Already, 300 local athletes like PBA players Jimmy Alapag, Noy Castillo and Yancy de Ocampo, 15-year-old Kyle Dandan, the first Filipino to win an ITF tournament on Philippine soil and 13-year-old Jessie Agra, a runner-up at this year's ITF, have benefited from the training regimen.

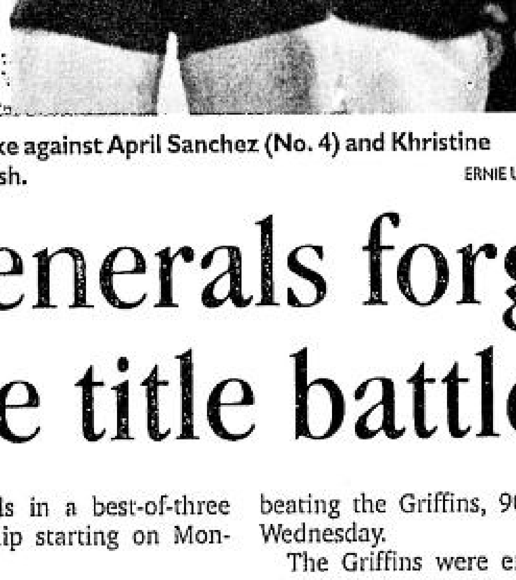
Plyosports is at the Adidas Sports Kamp on 28th Street corner Libertad Drive, Fort Bonifacio Global City, Taguig, Metro Manila. Rates are at P5,000 for ten sessions. For more information, call 8161131 or 0927-4669155 or email plyosports@yahoo.com.

Anniversary derby elimination today

MORE than 100 matches await aficionados today at Roligon Mega Cockpit as the 4-stage process of separating the men from the boys ends tonight with the fourth elimination round of the P4M Roligon 15th Anniversary 7-Cock Derby.

Action starts at noon. Heading the entries are Pol Estrellado and Boy Roy, William Go, Boy Lechon, Jake and Butch Macasaet, William Co, Dicky Lim, Tony Lasala, lawyer. Rudy Salud and Lito Orillaza, Gerry Ramos and Sonny Lagon.

Reigning World Slasher champ Boy Marzo is fielding two entries tonight under the BM Bulalayaw RB entry combined with Dubai-based businessman Rodones Barro.



TORRE

Torre, Mariano head strong field in Tanauan active chess tourney

GRANDMASTER Nelson Mariano II and GM candidate Jayson Gonzales have confirmed participation in the 1st Tanauan Chess Open-Mayor's Cup on March 4-5 at the Speaker Jose B. Laurel Memorial Gymnasium in Tanauan City, Batangas.

Other early entries include GM Eugene Torre, GM-candidate Mark Paragua, IM Ronald Dableo, GM-candidate Ronald "Onat" Bancod, GM-candidate Fernie Donguines, 2004 national champion and IM-candidate Darwin Laylo, IM Idelfonso Datu, NMs Winston Silva, Bob Jones Liwagon, Mirabeau Maga and five-time Philippine executive champion Jenny Mayor.

A total of P200,000 in cash prizes will be at stake with the champion getting P100,000 and a trophy. The second placer receives P40,000; third, P20,000; fourth, P10,000; fifth, P5,000; 6th-10th, P2,000 each; and 11th-20th, P1,000 each.

The event is supported by the First Asia Institute and the city government.

Registration fee is P750.

Registration is being accepted at the First Asia Institute, #2 President Laurel Highway, Tanauan City, Batangas tels. (043) 778-0656 and 778-1529 loc. 106 (ask for Daniel Darusin) or at the ACCA (ask for Susan Manalo), 6th Floor PDCP Bank Centre, Leviste corner Rufino Streets, Salcedo Village, Makati City or contact cellphone 0918-6966581 and e-mail: acca@info.com.ph for other details. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

InqBox
Question of the Week
Is the government justified to raise the value-added tax (VAT) from 10 percent to 12 percent? Why or why not?
Senders of d first 10 texts publishd in Tuesday's InqBox *wiL each receiv an *Inquirer Mug! U*
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(Maximum of 160 characters)
*Metro Manila winners can call Jane at 8978808.
Provincial winners can text:
Inquirer ad name/city/mailing address to 2207 or 283 as their prizes will be mailed to them

Please don't destroy me—Pacquiao

I'm very proud to be a Filipino and I will forever be a Filipino

By Recah Trinidad

MANNY Pacquiao yesterday threw hefty counterpunches ahead of his showdown with Erik Morales to deny charges that he's turning his back on his countrymen.

"I am very proud to be a Filipino and I will forever be a Filipino," Pacquiao told California-based Filipino sportswriter Winchell Campos.

Pacquiao also called for a stop to what he called wild and speculative news "so he can concentrate on his monumental showdown with Morales."

Campos reported that Pacquiao was disheartened to hear news coming from "uninformed and ambitious sportswriters from his native Philippines."

Pacquiao singled out broadcaster Ronnie Nathanielsz "for fabricating horrible tales and putting words into the mouths of people he has not even talked to."

Pacquiao swore he has been working himself silly to bring honor to his country.

*"Ginagawa ko ang lahat para makapagbigay ng karangalan para sa Pilipinas. Kaya ako nandito sa Amerika ay para makapag-*training *ng mabuti pero iyon pang mga nasa malayo ang gumugulo ng ensayo ko,"* said Pacquiao.

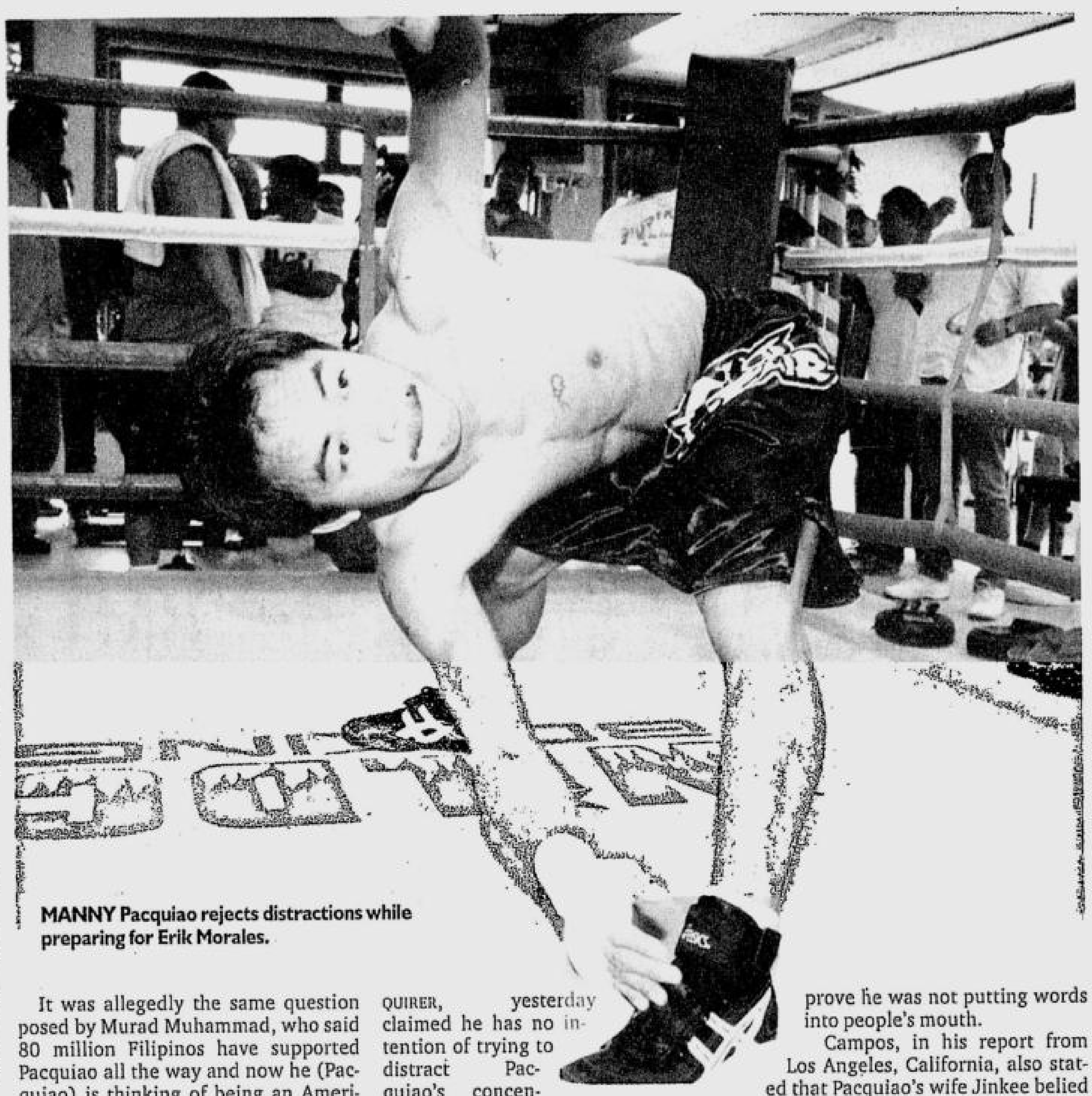
Nathanielsz's article

He was reacting to Nathanielsz's article which came out in the Manila Standard yesterday.

Contrary to fears being spawned by Nathanielsz, Campos said Pacquiao has vowed to do everything for his country.

"Nagsisikap ako para sa kapakanan ng bayan. Sa puso ko ako ay Pilipino, at kahit anong paraan, gagawin ko ang lahat para maiangat ang sambayanang Pilipino," said Pacquiao.

In his article, Nathanielsz quoted Team Pacquiao member Roberto "Boying" Nazario (when informed about a green card for Pacquiao and US citizenship reportedly promised by his new manager, Shelly Finkel) as saying: "You want to turn your back on the Philippines?"



MANNY Pacquiao rejects distractions while preparing for Erik Morales.

It was allegedly the same question posed by Murad Muhammad, who said 80 million Filipinos have supported Pacquiao all the way and now he (Pacquiao) is thinking of being an American.

The San Francisco-based Nazario, son of Pacquiao's business manager Rodolfo, however, stated that he has not talked to Nathanielsz when Pacquiao tried to reach him by phone for comment.

Nathanielsz, in an interview with INQUIRER, yesterday claimed he has no intention of trying to distract Pacquiao's concentration going into the biggest fight of his life, and that he has even sacrificed a lot of his energy in helping Pacquiao's career.

Nathanielsz also indicated that all his conversations with Boying Nazario had indeed happened. He said he was willing to show his PLDT bills just to prove he was not putting words into people's mouth.

Campos, in his report from Los Angeles, California, also stated that Pacquiao's wife Jinkee belied Nathanielsz's claim that he had talked to her.

I never talked to him," said Jinkee, who is enjoying staying in Los Angeles along with son Emmanuel Jr. after her husband transferred to a cosmopolitan two-bedroom apartment not too far from the Wild Card gym of Freddie Roach.

Nathanielsz yesterday explained he never claimed having talked to Jinkee.

"It was Boying Nazario who talked to her," Nathanielsz said.

"I am very proud to be a Filipino and I will forever be a Filipino," Pacquiao explained to countercharges that he will soon become a US citizen effectively leaving behind millions of Filipinos who are proud of him.

The Filipino sports hero has admitted that he is set to apply for a green card because of his extraordinary talent, which is not supposed to be mistaken as a bid to get US citizenship.

Free help

According to Campos, Immigration lawyer Richard Wilner has offered his services for free and his help should not be misinterpreted a come-on by Finkel to lure Pacquiao to sign with him.

"Please stop crab mentality. If we are to move on as a nation, we have to help one another and not destroy with rumors," said Pacquiao, who had a hearty laugh when he saw the reports of Nathanielsz on the Internet.

Nathanielsz, in the same article, wrote that Pacquiao received $300,000 in signing bonuses plus the promise of citizenship, citing "sources."

Nathanielsz, as reported by Campos, also stated that Roach's assistant, Justin Fortune, was tasked by Finkel and Roach to keep an eye on Pacquiao while Fernandez's role was reduced to a mere "helper," according to Boying Nazario.

Nazario also denied having said that.

Fernandez, the two-time Philippine Trainer of the Year, was mad and upset that he has been relegated to a mere "helper." Fortune also laughed at the statement and joked, "Where is my percentage?"

In conclusion, Campos reported that HBO has acknowledged Pacquiao's new management team and promised him that his March 19 fight with Morales will not be put in jeopardy because "he is one of the most exciting fighters in the world today." *With a report from Salven L. Lagumbay*

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Mayol defends OPBF title April 4 in Osaka

ORIENTAL and Pacific Boxing Federation minimumweight kingpin Rodel Mayol makes a third defense of his title when he faces Japanese challenger Takayuki Korogi on April 4 in Osaka.

Japanese boxing expert Joe Koizumi has reported to Fightnews that the Mayol-Korogi bout will serve as the chief support to the titular defense of World Boxing Council 105-lb champ Isaac Bustos of Mexico who will defend for the first time against Japanese Katsunari Takayama (14-1, 7 KOs).

Another Filipino, WBC No. 8 minimumweight Arman Dela Cruz (17-5-1, 7 KOs) of Bohol, the reigning WBC international champ, will take on Japanese prospect Ken Nakajima (12-2, 8 KOs) in a 10-round non-title bout. Koizumi said the event will be promoted by Green Tsuda Promotions in association with Teiken Promotions.

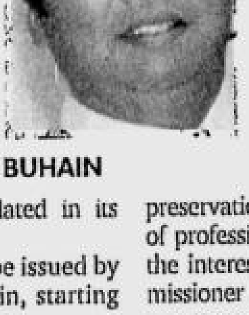
The undefeated Mayol (20-0, 16 KOs) is coming off a seventh-round technical knockout win over Indon Marti Polii on Jan. 29 in Parañaque City. He captured the OPBF crown with an impressive first-round knockout victory over then defending champion Genki Ohnaka in Tokuyama, Japan, on Dec. 7, 2003.

Salven L. Lagumbay

MAYOL: Defending champion

GAB tackles Taulava case

THE GAMES and Amusements Board yesterday passed a unanimous resolution to investigate the growing controversy involving basketball star Asi Taulava and PBA Commissioner Noli Eala.



BUHAIN

The GAB, as an agency regulating the conduct of professional sports in the country, is tackling the case by virtue of its quasi-judicial authority as stipulated in its mandate.

Subpoenas are scheduled to be issued by the GAB, headed by Eric Buhain, starting Monday to the concerned parties.

GAB Commissioners Alex A. Paglumotan and Angel Bautista, as co-authors of the said Board resolution, jointly vowed to determine the citizenship of Taulava as well as other issues involving the affairs of the PBA "without fear and favor to no one."

"The main objective of the GAB in investigating the issue is for the preservation of professionalism in the conduct of professional sports in the country and for the interest of the common Filipinos," Commissioner Paglumotan said in a statement sent to media. *Salven L. Lagumbay*

SATURDAY Special

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NOW SHOWING

Gere, Lopez waltz the blues away

By Rito P. Asilo

"Shall We Dance?"

D: Peter Chelsom
S: Richard Gere, Jennifer Lopez, Susan Sarandon

AN UNEXAMINED life is not worth living. And Peter Chelsom's remake of Masayuki Suo's 1996 sleeper hit, "Shall We Dansu?," further affirms this precept. In Chelsom's Hollywood retelling, Richard Gere portrays the successful urbanite, John Clark, a handsome legal eagle with a thriving practice, a doting wife, Beverly (Susan Sarandon), and adoring teenage kids. He listlessly acknowledges a gnawing feeling in his gut that, beyond the comfortable veneer of his long-realized all-American dream, something is amiss.

One day, haunted by the recurring sight of Paulina (Jennifer Lopez), the beautiful woman with the wistful, distant stare who gazes out of the second-storey window of a ballroom dance school as his commuter train whizzes by, John gets off the carriage and impulsively signs up for dance lessons. The decision changes his life—and everybody else's around him—forever.

Meeting the lonely instructor is one thing. What he doesn't count on is hobnobbing with the dance school's colorful habitués:

The kooky single mother who intones cynical rhetoric on love and men for anyone who cares to listen; the dance hall owner whose idea of taking a break from teaching chores is to steal swigs of whiskey hidden in her locker, and John's heterosexual law-firm colleague who conceals his dance-floor theatrics with a Fabio-inspired wig and a "memorized" jargon of ballgame statistics to avoid speculation and ridicule.

But, the movie has made casting lapses: While the dashing Gere and the beguiling Lopez are showcased in tiptop terpsichorean form, and the eternally vivacious Sarandon is a cinematic fixture who never goes out of style, their big-screen pairings lack the chemistry necessary to make their scenes believable and empathetic.

Admittedly, it's hard to top the well-deserved acclaim reaped by Suo's film: A long list of best foreign language film honors, and 13 wins out of an awesome 14 nominations at the 1997 Japanese Academy Awards. The American remake loses some of the Japanese original's affecting irony, diluted by gaping differences in the two societies' socio-cultural norms.

Achieving personal joy by being unconventional may not be as shocking in Chicago as it is in Tokyo's conservative social landscape. But, Chelsom's heartwarming film, while incomparable to Baz Luhrmann's "Strictly Ballroom," triumphantly taps into man's neverending quest for happiness and meaning.

After all, who can refute Beverly's wise words as she waxes philosophical about her 19-year marriage?: "We need a witness to our lives. There are billions of people on the planet—what does one life really mean? In marriage, you're promising to care about everything: The good, bad, terrible and mundane things . . . all of it, all the time, everyday. You're saying, 'Your life will not go unnoticed because I will notice it. I will be your witness.'"

When John finally asks his loving wife to dance with him for the first time, she protests: "But, I don't know how to dance!" With a smile, he leads her to the dance floor and reminds her: "You've been dancing with me for 19 years." Sniff.

"A Very Long Engagement"

D: Jean-Pierre Jeunet
S: Audrey Tautou, Gaspard Ulliel

How long will you wait for love? For Jean-Pierre Jeunet's latest muse, the beautiful but polio-stricken Mathilde (Audrey Tautou), as long as it takes.

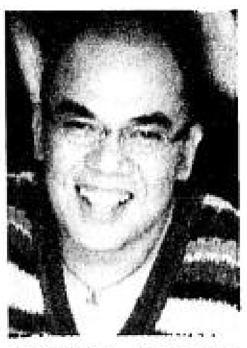
Combining visual bravado and a ripping

GERE/ A2-2

LOPEZ AND GERE. Charismatic performers, but with little chemistry.

'Homeboy' off to a good start

By Nestor U. Torre


ABUNDA. Engaging and empathetic host.

BOY Abunda's new weekday morning show, "Homeboy," got off to a good start last Monday on Channel 2. In its premiere episode, the group-discussion talk show featured women and the "facially-unusual" men they had married—meaning, the guys were either funny-looking or handsome.

The episode wanted to know how the wives of the plain-looking men got their relatives to "accept" their hubbies. As for the women with goodlooking spouses, did they have to fend off more "distracting" rivals?

Plus and minus factors

As the session warmed up, the new show's plus and minus factors made themselves felt. On the plus side, Boy was an engaging, empathetic host who asked interesting questions.

Some of the guests were similarly candid and informative in their responses.

And the show built up well to a moving finale, during which the couples renewed their "promises" to each other, some after 20 years of marriage.

On the minus side, the program used a "laugh and applause track" that was much too strident and obvious, and should be eliminated from future telecasts.

Yes, Filipino studio audiences can be on the shy or even sullen side, and don't respond as cheerfully as directors of talk shows would want, but there are ways to generate aural excitement and response without having to use an artificial-sounding laugh and applause track.

Also, the episode featured too many couples. As a result, Boy had his work cut out for him as he went all over the place, trying to keep the conversation interesting, lively and focused.

It would be better if the production's staffers did more astute research on possible guests' ability to keep things eventful, and then chose fewer but more interesting guests.

Selecting the people who appear in talk shows is always a gamble, but again, there are

'HOMEBOY'/ A2-2

MYGLOBE exclusive
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christian bautista
nina
paolo santos
the dawn
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Icons: Text L <keyword> to 2346 Ex: L tunogname1 to 2346
tunogname1 tunogname2 kitchiename paololist albumsidea pidoalbum dawnalbum ninasmile barbiealbum artstrongname

Tones: Ringtone-Text N <keyword> to 2346 Polytone-Text P <keyword> to 2346
Ex.: Ringtone-Text N close to 2346 Polytone-Text P close to 2346

SONGTITLE	ARTIST	KEYWORD
Wag na Wag Mong Sasabihin	Kitchie Nadal	wagnawag
Close	Paolo Santos	close
Tulad ng Dati	The Dawn	tuladngdati
Sayang Naman	Nina	sayangnaman
Sukob Na	17:28	sukobna
All I need	Barbie's Cradle	allineed
Don't Go	Viktoria	dontgo
You Won't See Me Crying	Passage	uwontsee
Liwanag Sa Dilim	Rivermaya	liwanag

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Reunion to remember

STREET SMART

Mandy Navasero

LAST Tuesday night at Amber Place in Fort Bonifacio, Archit Bartolome hosted a dinner party for Cocobank chairman Baby Perez and Mr. Pepe Breton, the oldest living Bankamerican executive, who will turn 88 years old on Feb. 14.

Pepe Breton began his career at BA's Juan Luna branch in 1945 with a handful of executives and employees. At the time, Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, China Bank, and the National City Bank of New York were all in the same area.

Pathway

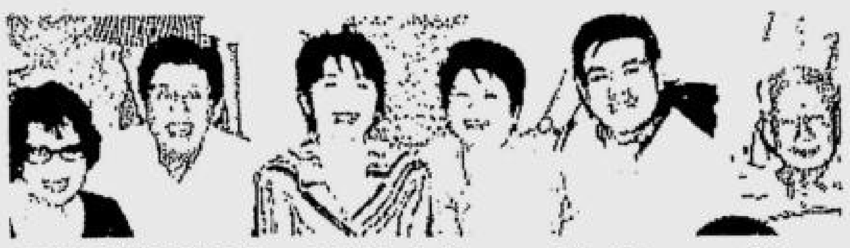
During high tide, the water would overflow from the sea and cover the cobblestone pathway. Pepe was in charge of the stockroom and was tasked to print forms for the bank's use. Eventually, he was promoted to vault teller.

In 1972, the Juan Luna branch relocated to the Doña Narcisa bldg. (one of the first buildings in Makati).

Pepe has four kids: three sons and a daughter. At the party, he spoke about the bank's generosity when he finally retired.

He chose Philamcare Insurance to provide for his old age—a preference that Bank of America granted on top of cash benefits. He recalled that every time he went for a check-up, he didn't have to pay for doctor's fees or medicines. When he needed to be admitted to a hospital, he could even stay in a suite.

Pepe cherishes being a Bankamerican retiree. Other Bankamericans can email us for the directory we're making, at mandynavasero@photo-pro.com.ph or mandynavasero@yahoo.com



BANKAMERICANS. (From left) Mandy Navasero, Nilo Chincuanco, Mila Dimaculangan, Nene and Archit Bartolome and Pepe Breton.

Gere . . .

From page A2-1

good tale on war and romance in the 1920s, Jeunet's latest collaboration with the French ingénue (last seen in "Amelie") depicts the unspeakable absurdities of war in scathing detail, captured with limpid visual succulence by Bruno Delbonnel's Academy Award-nominated cinematography.

Five soldiers in the 1917 Franco-German trench warfare are condemned to die in No Man's Land after they are caught voluntarily "maiming" themselves—considered an act of treachery—in the hope of eluding a lengthy tour of military duty. Back home, Mathilde patiently awaits the return of Manech (Gaspard Ulliel, a Josh Hartnett knock-off), even after news of her fiancé's sad fate reaches her.

Does she find him? We're not saying. But, when Mathilde finally gets her answer, she nestles comfortably on a bench, content with the knowledge that she's done her best to honor one very long, bittersweet engagement with the man who makes all her battles worth their scars.

'Homeboy'

From page A2-1

ways to up the level of success in this regard, and quality rather than quantity should be the operative principle when it comes to choice of guests.

More detailed observations: "Homeboy" is less shrill than other morning talk-variety shows on the tube, and that's a welcome change of pace.

Distracting

Last Monday, Boy wore white-rimmed glasses that were supposed to look trendy, but were in fact too distracting, and even made it difficult for viewers to get a good look at his eyes. This is a no-no as far as empathetic interaction goes. So, like the show's annoying applause and laugh track, those white glasses have got to go.

Let's end on an upbeat note: The show was supposed to be about unusual-looking husbands, but it ended up shedding light on much more—it was about love in its different ways of expressing itself, and viewers related well to how Boy and his guests touched on both its serious and amusing dimensions.

moviepickoftheWeek
Richard Gere Jennifer Lopez Susan Sarandon
Shall we Dance?
MTRCB Rating: G (All ages admitted)

SM CINEMA movietime

OPENS THIS WEEK

ELEKTRA
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MEET THR FOCKERS
MTRCB RATING: PG13

KUNG FU HUSTLE
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2 MEET THE FOCKERS
11:25 FS / 11:55 MF / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35 / 10:30 LFS / 10:45 LMF / 12:40 END

METRO MANILA

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1 SHALL WE DANCE
2 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
3 SHALL WE DANCE
4 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
5 RACING STRIPES
6 WITHOUT A PADDLE
7 KUNG FU HUSTLE
8 OCEAN'S TWELVE
9 MEET THE FOCKERS
10 ELEKTRA
11 BLADE TRINITY
12 WHITE NOISE

sm city fairview
1 SALSA smcinemaexclusive
2 KUNG FU HUSTLE
3 OCEAN'S TWELVE
4 ELEKTRA
5 MEET THE FOCKERS
6 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
7 SHALL WE DANCE
8 RACING STRIPES
9 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
10 MAD HOUSE
11 BLADE TRINITY
12 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE

sm city north edsa
1 ELEKTRA
2 RACING STRIPES
3 WITHOUT A PADDLE
4 KUNG FU HUSTLE
5 SHALL WE DANCE
6 MEET THE FOCKERS
7 SHALL WE DANCE
8 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT

sm city manila
1 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
2 KUNG FU HUSTLE
3 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
4 SHALL WE DANCE
5 RACING STRIPES
6 ELEKTRA
7 WITHOUT A PADDLE
8 BLADE TRINITY
9 MEET THE FOCKERS
10 WHITE NOISE
11 LITTLE BLACK BOOK smcinemaexclusive
12 MAD HOUSE

sm city sta. mesa
1 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
2 SHALL WE DANCE
3 ELEKTRA
4 MEET THE FOCKERS
5 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
6 RACING STRIPES
7 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE
8 BLADE TRINITY
9 KUNG FU HUSTLE
10 WHITE NOISE

sm city southmall
1 SHALL WE DANCE
2 RACING STRIPES
3 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
4 SALSA smcinemaexclusive
5 BLADE TRINITY
6 OCEAN'S TWELVE
7 KUNG FU HUSTLE
8 ELEKTRA
9 MEET THE FOCKERS
10 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT

sm city bicutan
1 ELEKTRA
2 SHALL WE DANCE
3 MEET THE FOCKERS
4 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13

sm cinema tutuban
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

sm supercenter sucat
1 ELEKTRA
2 SHALL WE DANCE
3 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
4 MEET THE FOCKERS

LUZON

sm city pampanga
1 ELEKTRA
2 BIRTH
3 KUNG FU HUSTLE
4 OUT OF REACH
5 HELLWOLF
6 MEET THE FOCKERS

sm city baguio
1 KUNG FU HUSTLE
2 MEET THE FOCKERS
3 UNO
4 ELEKTRA

sm city batangas
1 KUNG FU HUSTLE
2 BLADE TRINITY
3 ELEKTRA
4 WHITE NOISE

sm city dasmariñas
1 SHALL WE DANCE
2 ELEKTRA
3 MAD HOUSE
4 MEET THE FOCKERS

sm city marilao
1 ELEKTRA
2 MAD HOUSE
3 SCHOOL FOR SEDUCTION
4 BLADE TRINITY

sm city bacoor
1 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE
2 RACING STRIPES
3 ELEKTRA
4 SHALL WE DANCE
5 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
6 MEET THE FOCKERS
7 WHITE NOISE
8 BLADE TRINITY

sm city lucena
1 KUNG FU HUSTLE
2 HELLWOLF
3 UNO
4 RAISE YOUR VOICE

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

sm city cebu
1 ELEKTRA
2 KUNG FU HUSTLE
3 MEET THE FOCKERS
4 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE
5 HAROLD AND KUMAR
6 OCEAN'S TWELVE
7 BLADE TRINITY
8 ELEKTRA

sm city iloilo
1 RAISE YOUR VOICE
2 RESERVED
3 WHITE NOISE
4 MAD HOUSE
5 KUNG FU HUSTLE
6 ELEKTRA
7 RESERVED
8 GEORGE AND THE DRAGON

sm city davao
1 ELEKTRA
2 SCHOOL FOR SEDUCTION
3 RAISE YOUR VOICE
4 HAROLD AND KUMAR
5 KUNG FU HUSTLE
6 WHITE NOISE

sm city cagayan de oro
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2 HONEY
3 WHITE NOISE
4 ELEKTRA

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goingon

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little BLACK BOOK

MTRCB Rating: PG13

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LITTLE BLACK BOOK

Stacy Holt (Brittany Murphy), an associate producer for daytime talk show hostess Kippie Kann (Kathy Bates), is frustrated when her boyfriend Derek (Ron Livingston) refuses to discuss his past relationships. With the encouragement of her co-worker Barb (Holly Hunter), she delves into his Palm to learn about his ex-girlfriends. Using the show as a ruse, Stacy interviews and befriends them, only to discover that the past, in a few instances, is rather present!

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3 (DOLBY) ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13 R13
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PREMIERE
(DOLBY) ELEKTRA PG13

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4 GOLD (DTS) ELEKTRA
5 GOLD (DOLBY) ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13
6 GOLD (SDDS) SHALL WE DANCE
7 GOLD (DOLBY) A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
8 KUNG FU HUSTLE
9 RACING STRIPES
10 MEET THE FOCKERS

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3 SHALL WE DANCE
4 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
5 RACING STRIPES

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3 OCEAN'S TWELVE
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2 UNO
3 (DTS EX) ELEKTRA
4 SCHOOL OF SEDUCTION

Cine Nepo (Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121
1 MEET THE FOCKERS
2 SCHOOL OF SEDUCTION
3 (DOLBY) HAUNTED SPIRIT
4 (DTS) ELEKTRA

Cine Nepo (Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489
1 WHITE NOISE
2 BLADE TRINITY
3 (DOLBY) KUNG FU HUSTLE
4 (DTS) 2046

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2 SOON TO OPEN
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4 SHALL WE DANCE

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3 (DTS) ELEKTRA
4 MEET THE FOCKERS

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3 HAPPY TOGETHER
4 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
5 ENTENG KABISOTE

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2 ELEKTRA
3 MAD HOUSE

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1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RETURN OF THE DEMONS
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) ELEKTRA
5 SCHOOL OF SEDUCTION

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2 ANG GALING GALING MO BABES
3 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13
4 BLADE TRINITY
5 (DOLBY) ELEKTRA
6 SHALL WE DANCE

starmall Movies www.clickthecity.com.ph (Las Pinas) tel (047) 237.7007
1 (DOLBY) SO HAPPY TOGETHER
2 KING RAT

Lianas Cinema (Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) OCEAN'S TWELVE
2 BLADE TRINITY
3 KUNG FU HUSTLE
4 (DTS)

Lianas MovieCity (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) MAD HOUSE
2 MEET THE FOCKERS
3 (DTS) ELEKTRA
4 HANEP SA PORMA HAYOP SA GANDA
5 PAKAWALANG PUSO

Mega Center Mall (Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283
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2 HANEP SA PORMA HAYOP SA GANDA
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4 (DOLBY) KUNG FU HUSTLE

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1 HONEY
2 ELEKTRA
3 WHITE NOISE
4 GEORGE & THE DRAGON

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2 "LIBERATED

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Ogie's music speaks to the heart

By Jocelyn Valle

OGIE Alcasid usually visits websites on golf. But recently, he ventured into other locations on the Net and he found out that one of his compositions, "Pangako," has been included in the soundtrack of a soap opera in Korea.

"At first, I didn't believe it," he recalls. "But, people have been telling me about it. They say it's been translated into Korean, others say it's in English. EMI, my music publisher, is now investigating the matter. *Akala siguro ng producers ng* soundtrack, *hindi makakarating dito.*"

International

Ogie has no idea how "Pangako" ended up in Korea, but one thing's for sure, his music has gone international. And why not? His melodies speak directly to the heart. You only need to hum the melody—not sing the lyrics—of "Kailangan Kita," and the feeling of longing comes through. No wonder, it was also used as the title and theme song of Aga Muhlach and Claudine Barretto's recent romantic drama.

Sharon Cuneta is slated to record his hits (aside from "Pangako" and "Kailangan Kita," the collection will include "Kung Mawawala Ka," "Sa Kanya," "Kailangan Kita," etc.), plus two new songs written especially for the Megastar, in a concept album, "Sharon Sings Alcasid."

But, did you know that it was only three years ago, during his first concert at the Aranata Coliseum, that Ogie finally felt confident about his music?

No focus

"Prior to that, I was just doing everything," says the 37-year-old performer. "I had no focus then. It was just a crazy idea to do 'OA sa Hits' in a venue like Araneta, but the response of the public was overwhelming. It gave me confidence to focus more on my music. God gave me the talent to sing and to write songs, *'di ba mahirap gawin 'yun?* So, I might as well use it," he smiles.

While Ogie considers the popularity of singing contests that churn out younger talents as a threat to a 15-year veteran like himself, he also takes this as a reason to not become complacent.

"These competitions focus on aspiring singers," he points out. "Before *kasi*, it was more about becoming an *artista*. Now, these kids really want to become singers and musicians. And they are able to build a fan base fast.

ALCASID. His songs will be featured in Sharon Cuneta's next album.

"During my time, we took our sweet time to develop our audience. We did the rounds of lounges and learned how to work an audience by singing week after week in the same venue.

More pressure

"In a way, *kawawa naman ang* young singers *ngayon*, because there's more pressure to come up with hit songs immediately. It's great to have gold and platinum awards, *pero mag*-enjoy *naman kayo!*"

He considers Sarah Geronimo, Rachelle Ann Go and Kyla the best of the young lot.

Kyla, Rachelle Ann and Myx DJ Iya will be Ogie's guests in his two-night Valentine concert, "Power of Love," at the Music Museum on Feb. 14 and 15.

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GALLERIA 632-9115/16

1 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT • THX
1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00
2 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13
10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
3 RACING STRIPES
10:50 1:05 3:20 5:35 7:50 10:00
4 WITHOUT A PADDLE
10:50 1:05 3:20 5:35 7:50 10:00
5 ELEKTRA
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
6 SHALL WE DANCE
10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
7 BLADE TRINITY
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
8 BATH HOUSE
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
9 MEET THE FOCKERS
1:05 3:20 5:35 7:50 10:00
10 WHITE NOISE
12:20 2:40 5:00 7:20 9:40

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 SHALL WE DANCE
10:35 12:50 3:05 5:20 7:35 9:50
2 RACING STRIPES
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
3 ELEKTRA
10:35 12:50 3:05 5:20 7:35 9:50
4 RESERVE
5 MEET THE FOCKERS
10:20 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
6 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13
10:35 12:50 3:05 5:20 7:35 9:50
7 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
10:30 1:20 4:10 7:00 9:50

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE
11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00
2 ELEKTRA
11:00 1:30 4:00 6:30 9:00
3 KUNG FU HUSTLE
10:50 12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00
4 MEET THE FOCKERS
11:20 1:40 4:00 6:30 9:00
5 SHALL WE DANCE
12:30 3:00 5:30 8:00 10:30
6 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
10:30 1:00 3:30 6:00 8:20 10:30
7 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
12:30 3:00 5:30 8:00 10:30
8 RACING STRIPES
10:50 1:10 3:30 5:50 8:10 10:30

NOVALICHES 935-3229/31

1 ELEKTRA
10:40 1:05 3:30 5:55 8:25
2 RACING STRIPES
11:40 1:55 4:05 6:15 8:25
3 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
10:30 1:00 3:30 6:00 8:30
4 BLADE TRINITY
12:50 2.50 4:50 6:50 8:50
5 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE
11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 8:55
6 SHALL WE DANCE
11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 8:55
7 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13
10:40 1:05 3:30 5:55 8:25
8 OCEAN'S TWELVE
12:30 3:00

PIONEER 687-5378

1 SHALL WE DANCE
2 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13
3 RACING STRIPES
4 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575

1 UNO
2 RESIDENT EVIL 2
3 NED KELLY
4 SYLVIA

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1 ELEKTRA
2 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13
3 RACING STRIPES
4 SHALL WE DANCE

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Submit an 8R size black and white or colored photo of you with your buddies on an adventure trip and provide an off-the-wall description.

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**Photo entries will be exhibited on February 10 and onwards at Robinsons Movieworld ERMITA*

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1 MEET THE FOCKERS
2 SHALL WE DANCE
3 SCHOOL FOR SEDUCTION
4 MADHOUSE
5 ELEKTRA

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1 BLADE TRINITY
2 ELEKTRA
3 IN SEARCH OF AN IMPOTENT MAN
4 GEORGE AND THE DRAGON
5 WHITE NOISE

DASMARIÑAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416-4332

1 ELEKTRA
2 SHALL WE DANCE
3 BLADE TRINITY
4 MADHOUSE
5 MEET THE FOCKERS

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1 ELEKTRA
2 HAUNTED SPIRITS 2
3 SCHOOL FOR SEDUCTION
4 MEET THE FOCKERS

IMUS (046) 875-3839 (046) 471-8188

1 ELEKTRA
2 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE
3 SHALL WE DANCE
4 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13
5 MEET THE FOCKERS
6 RACING STRIPES

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1 BIRTH
2 2046
3 SCHOOL FOR SEDUCTION
4 MEET THE FOCKERS
5 HELLWOLF
6 ELEKTRA

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2 NED KELLY
3 ELEKTRA
4 WHITE NOISE
5 SCHOOL FOR SEDUCTION
6 UNO

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5 MADHOUSE
6 2046

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3 Return of the Demons	1 School of Seduction	1 Happy Together
4 Elektra	2 Ang galing galing mo Babes	2 King Rat
5 School of Seduction	3 Assault Precint 13	
	4 Blade Trinity	
	5 Elektra	
	6 Shall We Dance	

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GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
11:55, 2:45, 5:35, 8:25, 11:10
R 13

2 SHALL WE DANCE
10:40 1:05, 3:35
6:05, 8:35, 11:00
PG-13

3 ELEKTRA
10:40, 1:05, 3:35
6:05, 8:35, 11:00
PG 13

4 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13
10:50, 1:15, 3:45
6:15, 8:45, 11:10
R-13

POWER PLANT CINEMA

Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41 DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

RACING STRIPES GP 12:40,3:00,5:20,7:40,10:00	A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT R13 11:45,2:20,4:55,7:30,10:55	MEET THE FOCKERS PG13 12:15,2:45,5:15,7:45,10:15
ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13 R13 12:50,3:10,5:30,7:50,10:10	ELEKTRA PG13 12:45,2:55,5:05,7:15,9:25	SHALL WE DANCE? GP 12:50, 3:10, 5:30, 7:50, 10:20

THEATRE MALL GREENHILLS

a landmark reinvented! DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 1
SHALL WE DANCE?
11:30, 2:10, 4:50, 7:30, 10:10
GP

CINEMA 2
A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
12:10, 3:00, 5:50, 8:40
R13

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.
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MUSIC MUSEUM
FEBRUARY 11-12 RICO J - with ELA V. & JENNIFER LEE 9:00 PM
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SHANG CINEPLEX

① SHALL WE DANCE
FS 12:00PM, 2:30PM, 5:00PM, 7:30PM, LMF 10:00PM (GP)

② RACING STRIPES
FS 12:00PM, 2:15PM, 4:30PM, 6:45PM, LMF 9:00PM (GP)

③ ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13
FS 12:10PM, 2:40PM, 5:10PM, 7:40PM, LMF 10:10PM (R-13)

④ A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
FS 10:40AM, 1:30PM, 4:20PM, 7:10PM, LMF 10:00PM (R-13)

PREMIERE THEATRE ELEKTRA
FS 12:00PM, 2:30PM, 5:00PM, 7:30PM, LMF 10:00PM (PG-13)
MOVIES, PRICES & SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

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Treat your family and friends to a thrilling movie experience only at the Shang.
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Shangri-La Plaza

Araneta Center LEISURE GUIDE

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The First and Only Real Cineplex in the Philippines!
ADMISSION: P99 (Free Seating) P120 (Reserved Seats)
ALL THEATERS DOLBY DIGITAL EX ULTRA SOUND, FULL STADIUM SEATING, GUARANTEED SEATS, NO STANDING ROOM.

Gateway CinePlex*10
Level 4, Gateway Mall

NOW SHOWING

ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13
1:50 4:20 6:50 9:20
SHALL WE DANCE
1:15 3:55 6:35 9:15
RACING STRIPES
1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00
A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
1:20 4:00 6:40 9:20
WITHOUT A PADDLE
12:00 2:15 4:30 6:45 9:00
ELEKTRA
1:50 4:20 6:50 9:20
MEET THE FOCKERS
12:00 2:15 4:30 6:45 9:00

ALI MALL CINEMAS

1 Dolby ELEKTRA
12:55 3:25 5:55 8:25
2 SDDS ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13
12:55 3:25 5:55 8:25
3 dts SHALL WE DANCE
12:30 3:10 5:50 8:30
4 Dolby A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
12:10 2:50 5:30 8:10
5 Dolby RACING STRIPES
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00

GATEWAY MALL

LIVE BAND! COOL JAZZ, COOL CLASSICS
Every Friday & Saturday 8:00 pm to 11:30 pm

ARANETA COLISEUM

Feb. 6	Game 4	PBA FINALS GINEBRA vs. Talk N' Text
Feb. 9	Game 5 If necessary	
Feb.13 & 14	GREATEST HITS OF MOTOWN	

NEW FIESTA CARNIVAL

OPEN: Tuesday to Saturday 4 PM to 10 PM
Sunday & Holiday 2 PM to 10 PM

3-DAY SALE SALVO

AT SM CITY NORTH EDSA BRINGS YOU SUPER DEALS!

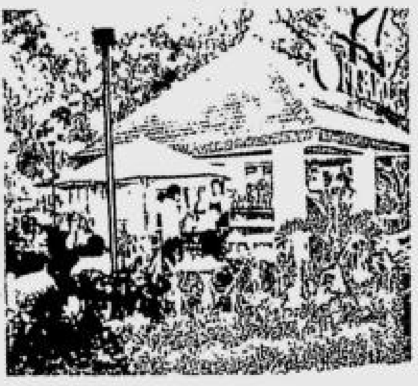
BIG, BIG DISCOUNTS MALLWIDE

Shoppers can take their pick from a wide selection of apparel, fashion, accessories, home and office furniture and decor, IT gadgets, big and small appliances, novelty items, hardware tools and many, many more at up to 50% price breaks at participating establishments mallwide.

THE 3-DAY SALE EVENT IS ON FEB. 4 TO 6 FROM 10AM TO 10PM (MALL HOURS).

It's peso-power buying days at the SM CITY NORTH EDSA 3-day SALE on February 4, 5 and 6!

MIDNIGHT BAZAAR at the Garden



Discover the pleasures of alfresco shopping at the tiangge-style **MIDNIGHT BAZAAR AT THE GARDEN** (fronting SM City North Edsa Main). The event offers shoppers the added fun of strolling amidst greens and blooms as you shop for great values and also your garden needs (e.g. flowers, plants, seeds). Pause awhile for coffee or delicious treats from **Figaro** and **The Coffee Experience**.

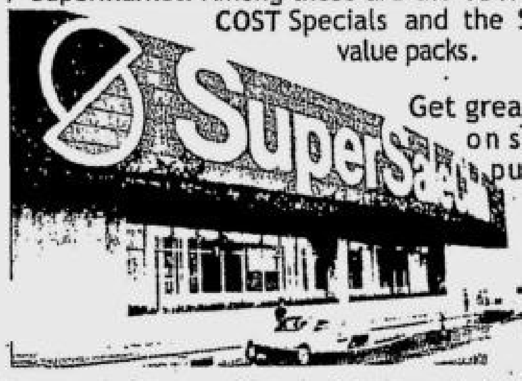
THE MIDNIGHT BAZAAR AT THE GARDEN IS ON FEBRUARY 4 AND 5, FROM 6PM TO 12MN.

SM SUPERSALE CLUB

Enjoy no-hassle shopping and warehouse discount values at one of the largest hypermarkets in the country.

Over 14,000 sq.m. of shopping space plus a complete line of groceries, fresh goods and novelty products, allow you to shop at leisure. No bumping into carts in narrow aisles; no long lines at check out counters.

At Supersale Club, you can enjoy the same low prices and great promotions on-going at SM Supermarket. Among these are the **TOTAL LOWER COST** Specials and the **SM BONUS** value packs.



Get great savings on selected purchases.

JOIN THE DAILY RAFFLE AND WIN LG HOME APPLIANCES

Every P500 single or accumulated purchase (cash or charge) at SM Department Store, SM Supermarket, or any participating mall establishment gives shoppers the chance to win any of these prizes:

6 units	LG .342m³(11.4cu.ft.) 2-door ICE BEAM DOOR COOLING REFRIGERATORS
9 units	LG 6.0kg FULLY AUTOMATIC WASHING MACHINES
1 unit	LG 19 L SEMI-AUTO CONTROL MICROWAVE OVEN

DAILY RAFFLE DRAW: FEB 4, 5, 6
Entertainment Plaza • 9:30pm
(near SM FOODCOURT)

HI-TECH FINDS at CYBERZONE

For you techies out there, hop on to **CYBERZONE** for the coolest place to surf the net.Get wired to the latest gadgets and gizmos; and get addicted to the latest mobile phone models. All these are up for grabs at **CYBERZONE**.

WELCOME THE YEAR OF THE ROOSTER AT THE MALL

Celebrate the Chinese New Year at SM City North Edsa, where a spectacular calendar of sights and sounds await the whole family!

FEB 7• 4pm Entertainment Plaza	WUSHU MARTIAL ARTS EXHIBITION
FEB 7• 5-9pm Entertainment Plaza	FENG SHUI CONSULTATION with expert Victor Wang
FEB 9• 10am onwards	LION DRAGON DANCE

And catch these other exciting events!

FEB 20• 4pm Entertainment Plaza	SANDARA PARKS ALBUM TOUR brought to you by Star Records
FEB 25• 4pm Entertainment Plaza	QUEZON CITY SYMPHONIC BAND listen to the delightful repertoire of this 62-pc musical ensemble

Celebrate Valentine's Day at SM CITY NORTH EDSA

Gather up your special loved ones and bring them over to SM City North Edsa where a line-up of exciting activities and entertainment await one and all!

FEB 10-14 Entertainment Plaza	VALENTINE PHOTO OP with your loved ones for memorable souvenir shots
FEB 12 The Garden	JOE D'MANGO live Valentine Concert with simultaneous radio broadcast. Featuring the Passage Band, Victoria and 17:28. Film showing of the movie " A Walk to Remember " at the Garden.
FEB 13 • 4pm Entertainment Plaza	DATING GAME WITH DENNIS TRILLO a romantic afternoon you certainly wouldn't want to miss!

great selections mallwide

up to 50% off

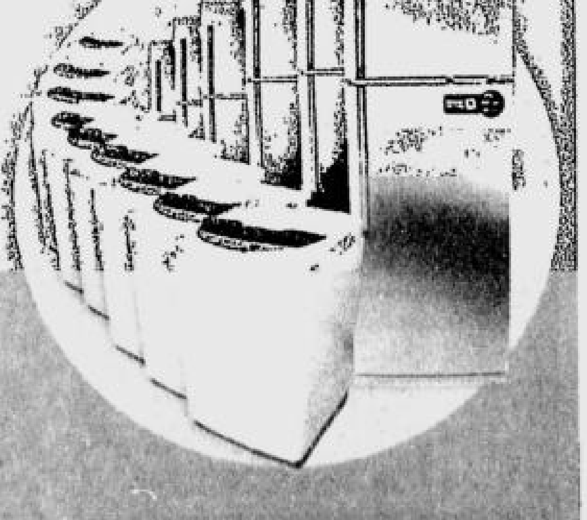
3day sale

feb 4.5.6

SM City
NORTH EDSA

mall hours: 10am - 10pm

JOIN the raffle and get a chance to WIN LG HOME APPLIANCES



with every P500 single or accumulated purchase at SM Department Store, SM Supermarket or any participating mall establishments.

RAFFLE COUPON REDEMPTION AREAS:

A. MAIN BUILDING, ENTERTAINMENT PLAZA (near SM Foodcourt)
B. ANNEX BUILDING, ENTRANCE 3 (Ground Floor near Kenny Rogers)
C. CYBERZONE BUILDING, ENTRANCE 2 (near Brownies Unlimited)

Special thanks to:

Kameraworld Kenny Rogers Roasters

See mechanics poster for details.
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A3-032, Series of 2005.

SNEAK PREVIEW

'Housewives' on the verge of a nervous breakdown

By Rito P. Asilo

THE COLORFUL women at the heart of Marc Cherry's "Desperate Housewives" don't just play for laughs. And, the irony of the ABC series' upset win over "Sex and the City" and "Will and Grace" as the best musical or comedy television series at the recent Golden Globes isn't lost on us—even its stars couldn't say to which category (comedy or drama) their show really belongs!

On this series, nobody sings or dances. And the dark and jaunty comic moments that zing in rapid succession from start to finish aren't nearly as obsequious as those found on, say, "Cheers" or "Joey." In fact, the show's narrator, Mary Alice (Brenda Strong)—one-fifth of the desperate quintet—tells us five minutes into the show that, about a week ago, she had found her moment of catharsis:

Without fanfare

After cooking breakfast for her husband and son, she dutifully performed her daily chores, and polished every nook and cranny of her upper middle-class suburban abode to gleaming perfection. Then, without fanfare, she retrieved an unused revolver—and blew herself to smithereens!

Welcome to Wisteria Lane, Mary Alice's bucolic, Stepford-like neighborhood, where her passing is grieved by the shell-shocked husband and son, who can't grasp the tragedy that has ruined their once seemingly-perfect lives, and by her circle of friends:

Lynette (Felicity Huffman) is the ex-hotshot career woman who looked forward to a kick-ass future—until she gave birth to her first child, followed by a second, third, fourth, etc! Soon, it became clear that she had to leave her enviable career for a life of domestic bliss—or blah.

CAST of Golden Globe-winning series: (From left) Huffman, Cross, Longoria and Hatcher.

Bree (Marcia Cross) is everybody's idea of the perfect housewife and mother—a living, breathing product of the Martha Stewart finishing school: Perfect hair and makeup, a smile that never breaks, color-coordinated outfits that go with her home's exquisite furniture, and gourmet dishes that takes her three hours to prepare.

Exasperated husband

—Then, her exasperated husband asks for a divorce because, as he explains, "I can't stand your plastic smile, your hair that never moves, and this detergent-commercial life anymore!"

In reaction, Bree slowly gathers up the flowers, excuses herself, cries her heart out in silence and, five minutes later, reappears

'HOUSEWIVES'/ A3-3

SALE
MARITHÉ +FRANÇOIS GIRBAUD
MARITHÉ+FRANÇOIS GIRBAUD
STOREWIDE REDUCTIONS
LAST FEW DAYS!
ALABANG TOWN CENTER • ALIMALL • AYALA CENTER CEBU • AYALA CENTER MAKATI
DUTY FREE PHILIPPINES • EASTWOOD CITYWALK 2 • FILINVEST FESTIVAL SUPERMALL
GATEWAY MALL • GREENHILLS • MARKET MARKET • ROCKWELL POWER PLANT MALL
ROBINSONS GALLERIA • ROBINSONS PLACE ILOILO • ROBINSONS PLACE IMUS
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SM CITY FAIRVIEW • SM CITY ILOILO • SM CITY LUCENA • SM CITY MANILA
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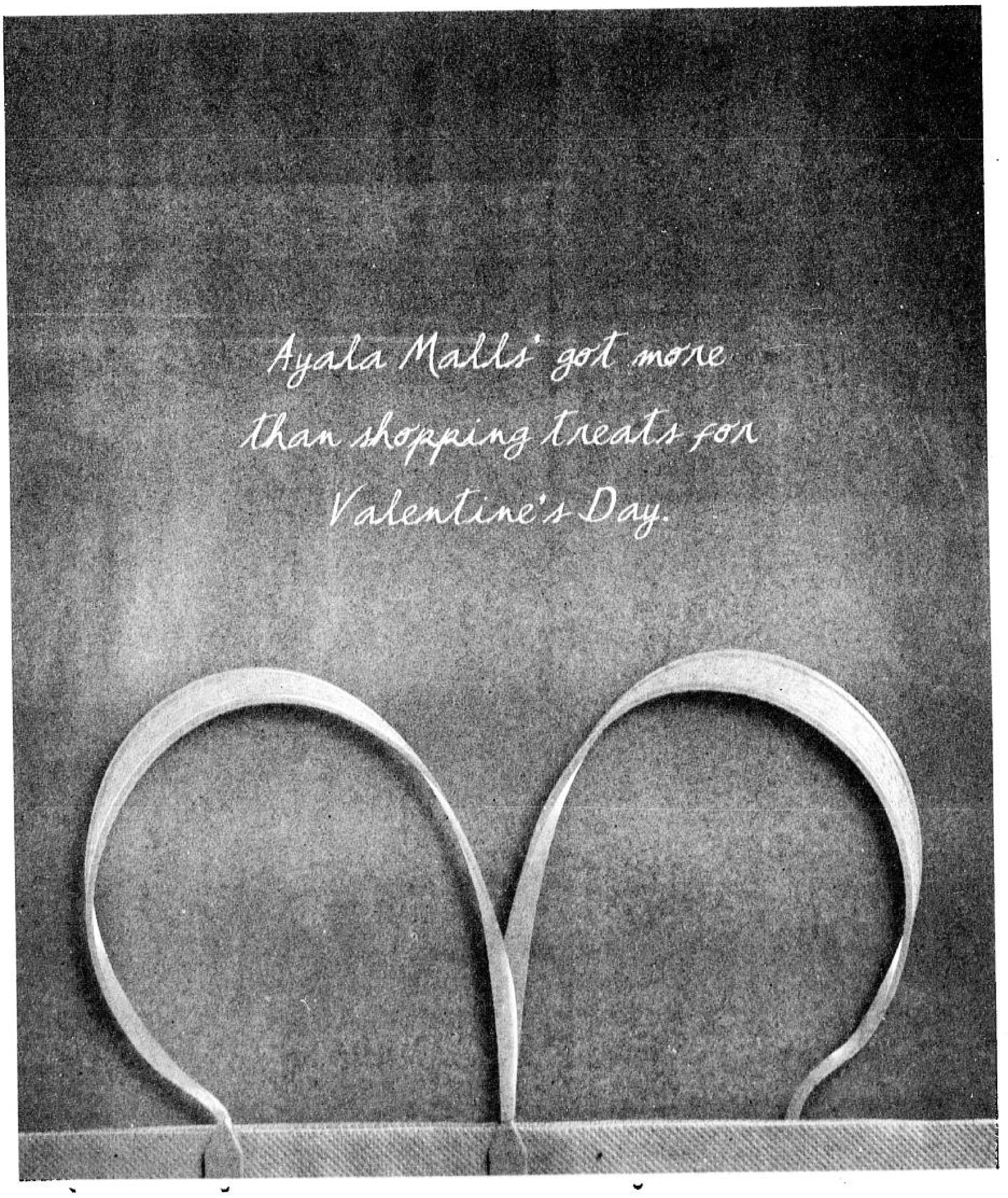
MARITHÉ FRANÇOIS GIRBAUD
www.girbaud.com
Extended up to February 15, 2005
*Approved by DTI - NCR
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3345, Series of 2004


Ayala Malls' got more than shopping treats for Valentine's Day.

AYALA CENTER
GLORIETTA • GREENBELT
Ms. Bituin Escalante
February 12, 8PM
Greenbelt 3 Park
Side A Band
February 13, 5PM
Glorietta Activity Center
Customer Service Hotlines:
Greenbelt 757-4853
Glorietta 752-7272
Text your comments: 0917-6095900
ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Jazz music, string quartets and flowers await all diners
February 12 to 14
Customer Service Hotlines:
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AYALA CENTER CEBU
Jose Mari Chan
February 14, 8PM
Lagoon Area
Text Customer Care Line: 0917-6220333
AYALA MALLS
LoveMall!
www.ayalamalls.com.ph

Regine and Pops team up in rare collaboration

By Nestor U. Torre

FERNANDEZ AND VELASQUEZ. Who's the better performer?

ON Feb. 11 and 12, Regine Velasquez and Pops Fernandez will perform in their first local concert together at the PSC-Ultra. They've shared stellar billing abroad but have heretofore refrained from doing so here, because they're regarded as rivals in these parts, with Pops being billed as the Concert Queen and Regine being tagged as Asia's Songbird.

So, why have they finally agreed to share the local concert stage? Because they're both assertive women, and their show has a theme of "women's empowerment," which they enthusiastically support.

More mature

Also, let's face it, both singing stars are more mature now, so professional rivalry is no longer such a big deal to them. Now, they can concentrate on more important matters, like boosting the same thematic message, enjoying singing together, and touching base with their respective sets of fans.

Seen from different perspectives, the Regine-Pops concert is interesting and potentially instructive for a number of reasons. First, it'll give more objective listeners and viewers an opportunity to finally appreciate the two singers in relation to each other, and decide who's the better performer.

That may not be as easy as it sounds. Right off the bat, it's clear that Regine is musically superior, but Pops has gotten this far in the musical field by knowing her vocal limitations and savvily making up for them with showmanship, production values and expert "imaging."

But, Regine also goes in for those plus factors, so the outcome of the friendly competition isn't all that clear-cut, and will have to be affirmed by the concert itself.

Controversial romance

Another element that has to be factored in relates to the two divas' more personal attributes, or even "baggage." Pops is known as an aggrieved ex-wife, while Regine has had at least one controversial romance in her life, in which she was seen to be the "aggriever."

So, in the area of romance, they stand on opposite sides, which could result in interesting possibilities in their choice of concert repertoire.

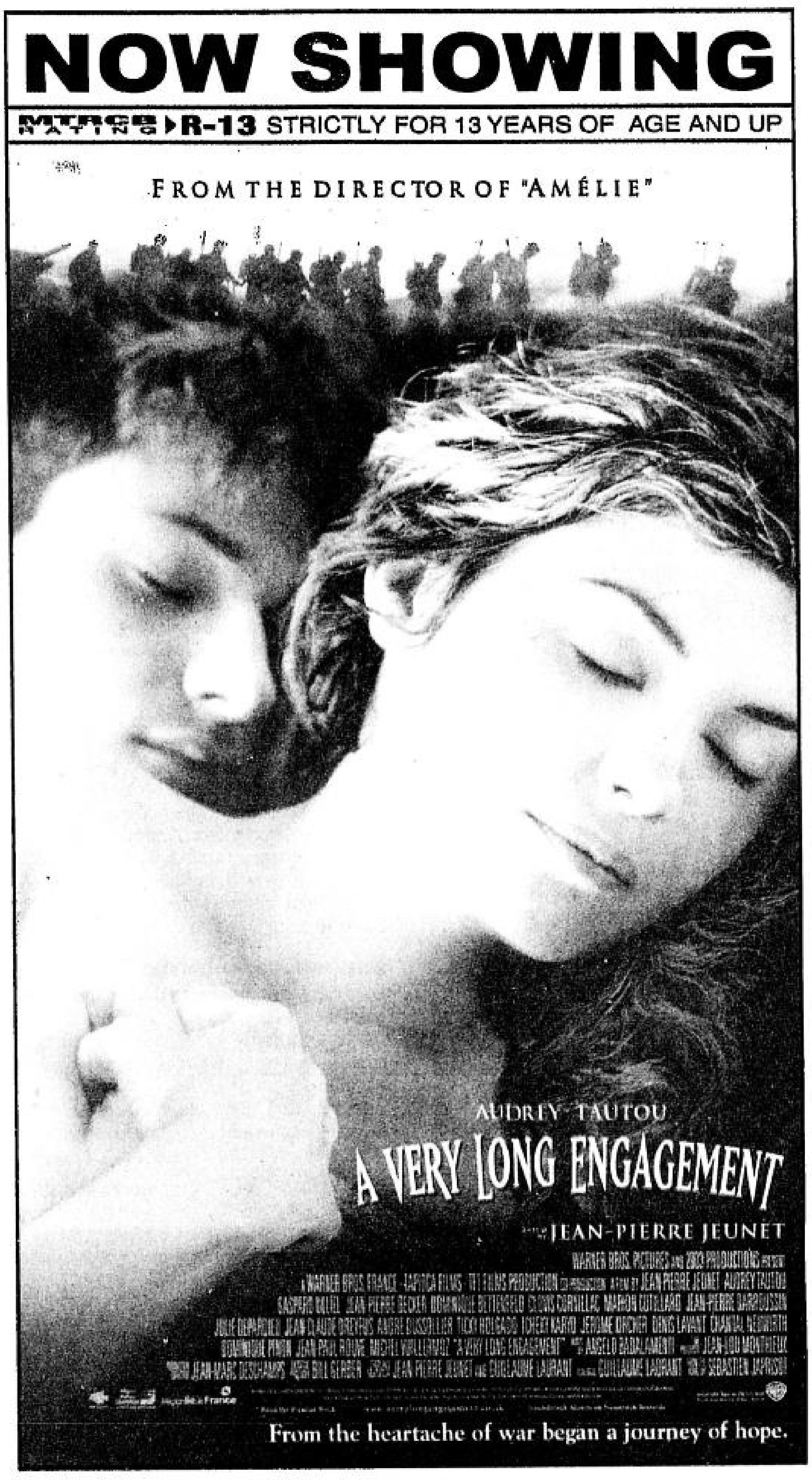
But, Pops has also been charged with another sort of romantic adventurism, if we can call it that, due to her recently concluded relationship with a younger man—which, to be fair, she has yet to admit.

Still, it *has* added an exciting edge to her heretofore humdrum image in the romance department, so she won't come off as emotionally dowdy when she sings with the more controversial Regine.

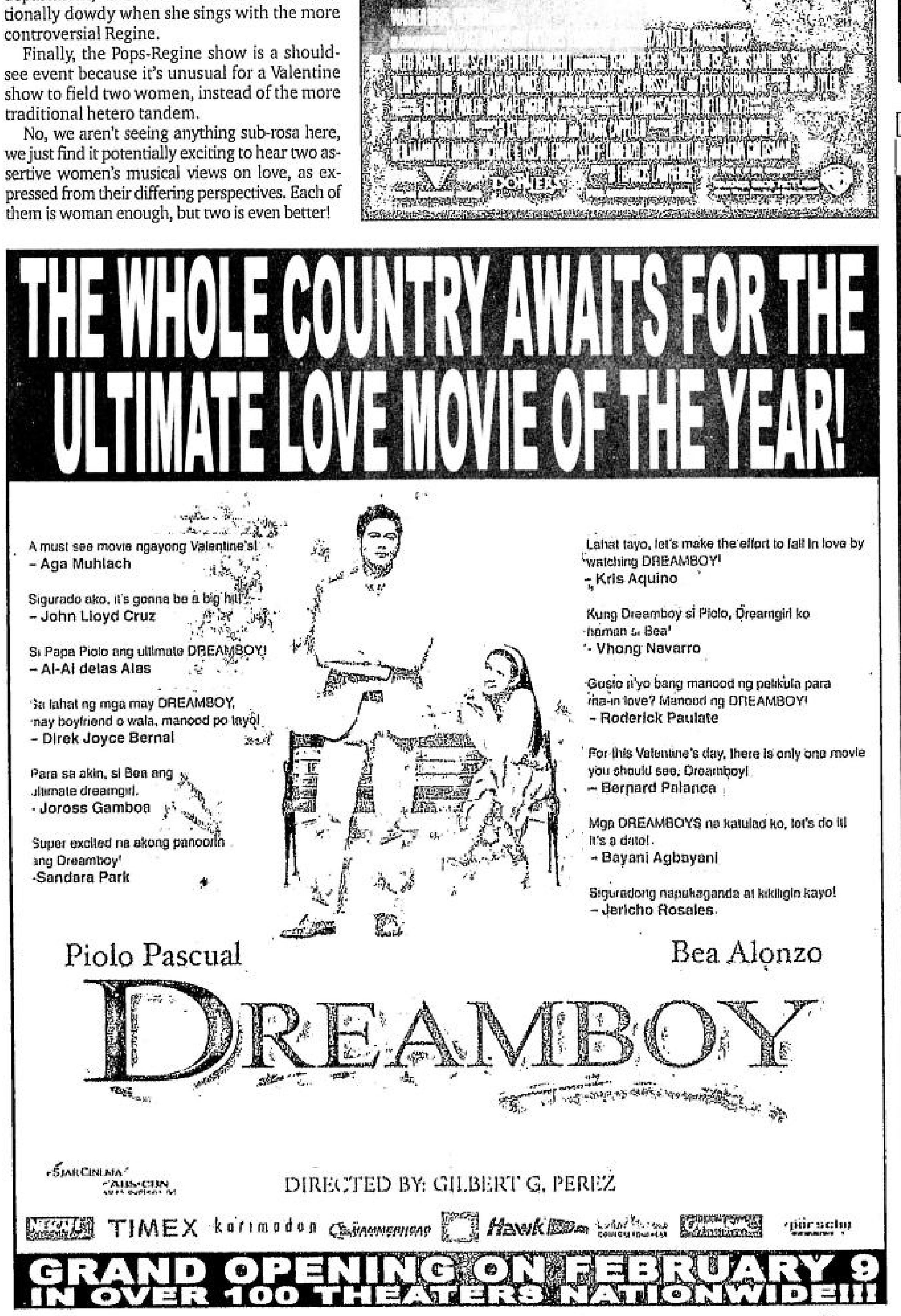
Finally, the Pops-Regine show is a should-see event because it's unusual for a Valentine show to field two women, instead of the more traditional hetero tandem.

No, we aren't seeing anything sub-rosa here, we just find it potentially exciting to hear two assertive women's musical views on love, as expressed from their differing perspectives. Each of them is woman enough, but two is even better!

OPENS FEBRUARY 16
MTRCB RATING PG-13 Children below 13 yrs old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult. Strong caution for parents beyond the kids
CONSTANTINE



NOW SHOWING
MTRCB RATING ▸ R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND UP
FROM THE DIRECTOR OF "AMÉLIE"
AUDREY TAUTOU
A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
JEAN-PIERRE JEUNET
WARNER BROS. PICTURES AND 2003 PRODUCTIONS PRESENT
From the heartache of war began a journey of hope.



THE WHOLE COUNTRY AWAITS FOR THE ULTIMATE LOVE MOVIE OF THE YEAR!

A must see movie ngayong Valentine's!
- Aga Muhlach

Sigurado ako, it's gonna be a big hit!
- John Lloyd Cruz

Si Papa Piolo ang ultimate DREAMBOY!
- Al-Al delas Alas

Sa lahat ng mga may DREAMBOY, may boyfriend o wala, manood po tayo!
- Direk Joyce Bernal

Para sa akin, si Bea ang ultimate dreamgirl.
- Joross Gamboa

Super excited na akong panoorin ang Dreamboy!
-Sandara Park

Lahat tayo, let's make the effort to fall in love by watching DREAMBOY!
- Kris Aquino

Kung Dreamboy si Piolo, Dreamgirl ko naman si Bea!
- Vhong Navarro

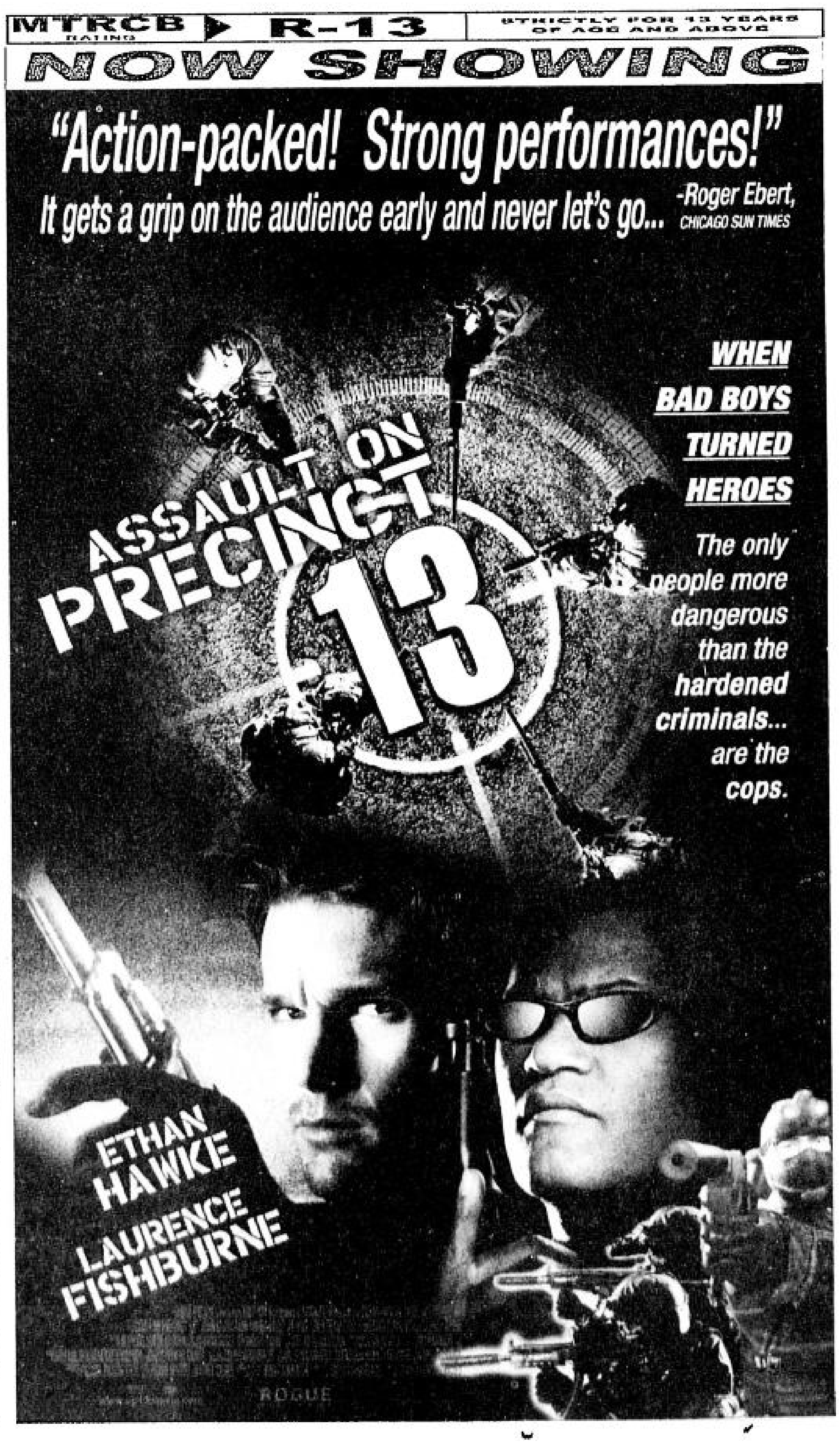
Gusto n'yo bang manood ng pelikula para ma-in love? Manood ng DREAMBOY!
- Roderick Paulate

For this Valentine's day, there is only one movie you should see, Dreamboy!
- Bernard Palanca

Mga DREAMBOYS na katulad ko, let's do it! It's a date!
- Bayani Agbayani

Siguradong napakaganda at kikiligin kayo!
- Jericho Rosales

Piolo Pascual Bea Alonzo
DREAMBOY
STAR CINEMA ABS-CBN
DIRECTED BY: GILBERT G. PEREZ
TIMEX
GRAND OPENING ON FEBRUARY 9 IN OVER 100 THEATERS NATIONWIDE!!!



MTRCB RATING ▸ R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND ABOVE
NOW SHOWING
"Action-packed! Strong performances!" It gets a grip on the audience early and never let's go... -Roger Ebert, CHICAGO SUN TIMES
WHEN BAD BOYS TURNED HEROES
The only people more dangerous than the hardened criminals... are the cops.
ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
ETHAN HAWKE LAURENCE FISHBURNE
ROGUE

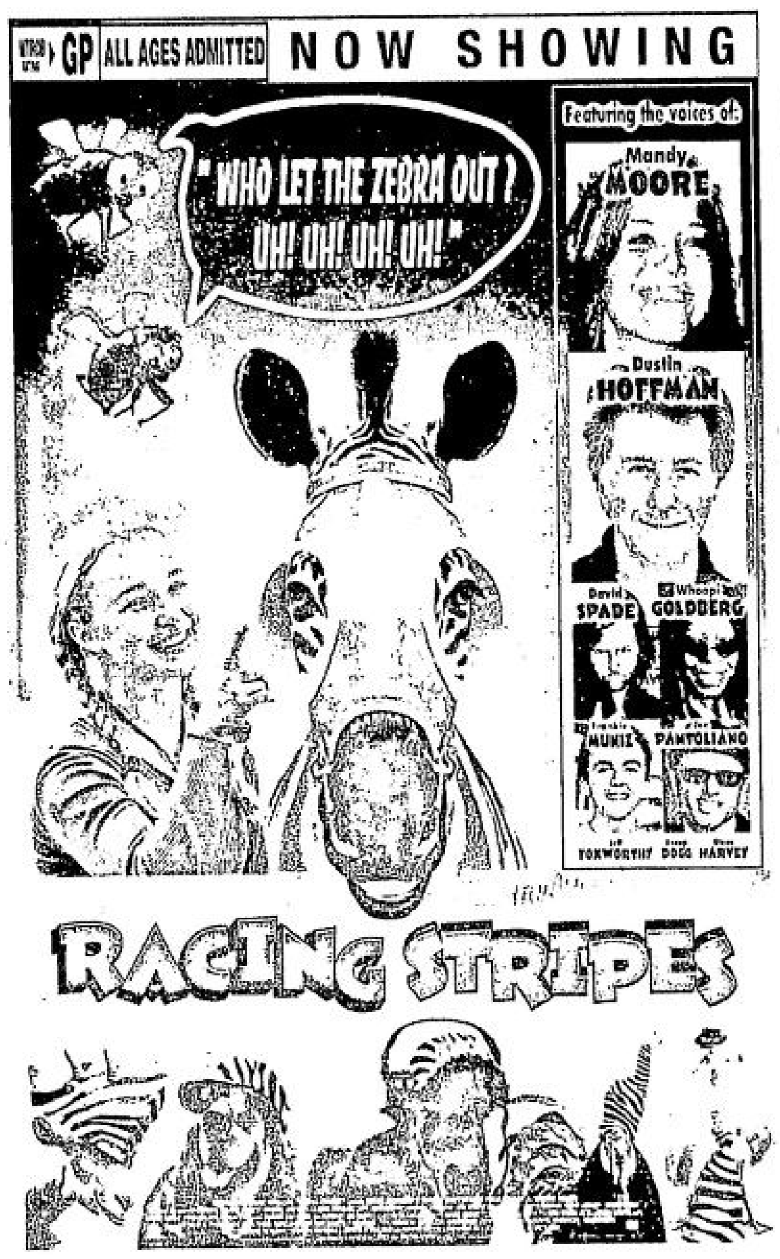
‘Housewives’ on the verge of a nervous breakdown

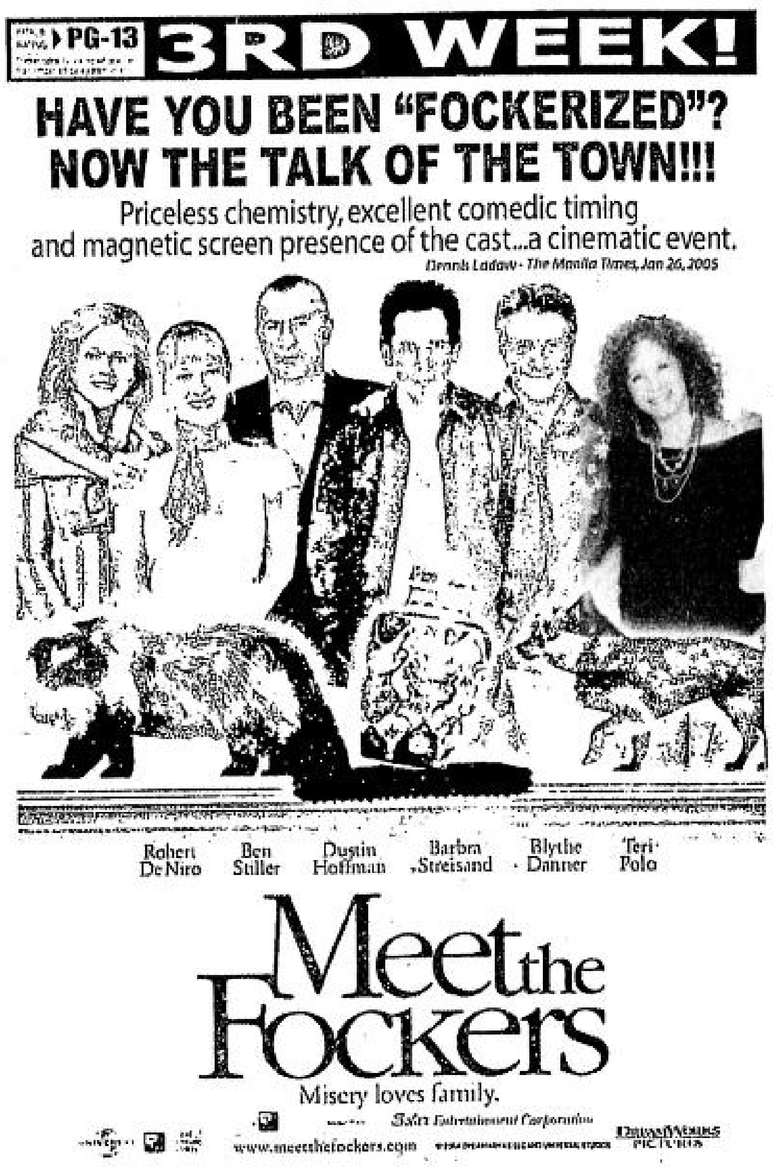
From page A3-1

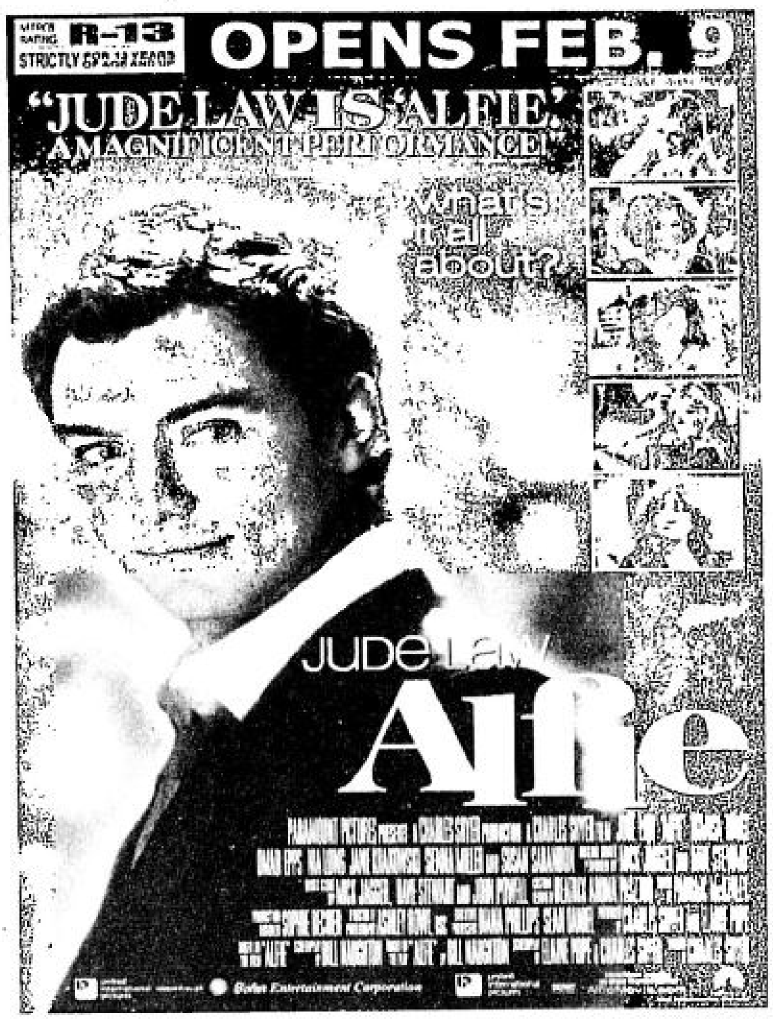
with the flowers—and a ready smile on her face!

There’s the fragile single mother, Susan (Golden Globe best actress winner Teri Hatcher), whose self-esteem is in tatters after her two-timing husband leaves her for his secretary. Egged on by a well-meaning daughter to play the dating game again, she gathers up every ounce of courage to date plumber Mike (James Denton), the hunky widower next door.

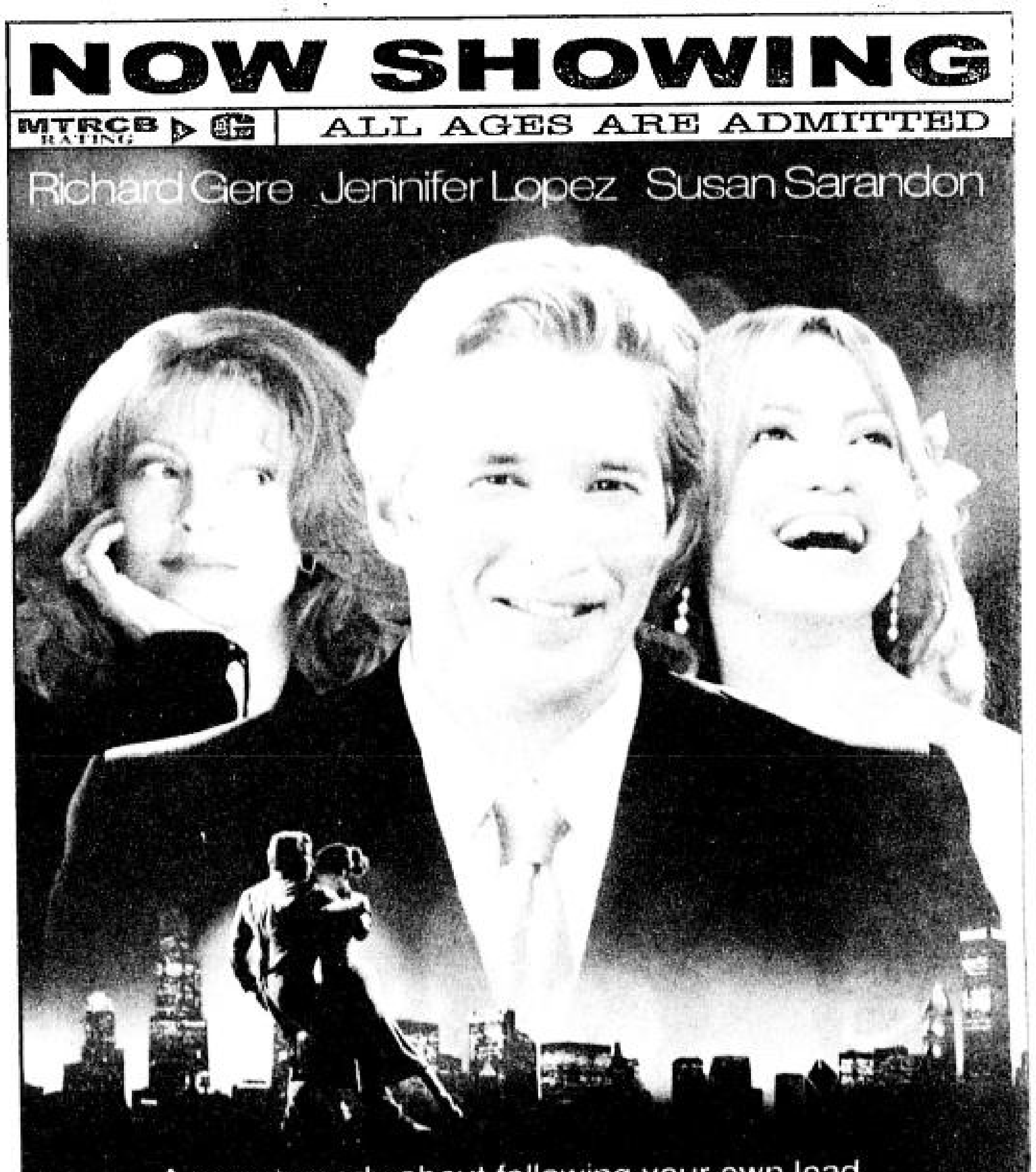
(To be concluded)


MTRCB RATING GP ALL AGES ADMITTED
NOW SHOWING
"WHO LET THE ZEBRA OUT? UH! UH! UH! UH!"
Featuring the voices of:
Mandy MOORE
Dustin HOFFMAN
David SPADE
Whoopi GOLDBERG
Frankie MUNIZ
Joe PANTOLIANO
Jeff FOXWORTHY
Snoop DOGG
Steve HARVEY
RACING STRIPES


MTRCB RATING PG-13
3RD WEEK!
HAVE YOU BEEN "FOCKERIZED"? NOW THE TALK OF THE TOWN!!!
Priceless chemistry, excellent comedic timing and magnetic screen presence of the cast...a cinematic event.
Dennis Ladaw - The Manila Times, Jan 26, 2005
Robert De Niro
Ben Stiller
Dustin Hoffman
Barbra Streisand
Blythe Danner
Teri Polo
Meet the Fockers
Misery loves family.
Solar Entertainment Corporation
www.meetthefockers.com
DreamWorks Pictures


MTRCB RATING R-13
OPENS FEB. 9
"JUDE LAW IS 'ALFIE'. A MAGNIFICENT PERFORMANCE!"
What's it all about?
JUDE LAW
Alfie
Solar Entertainment Corporation

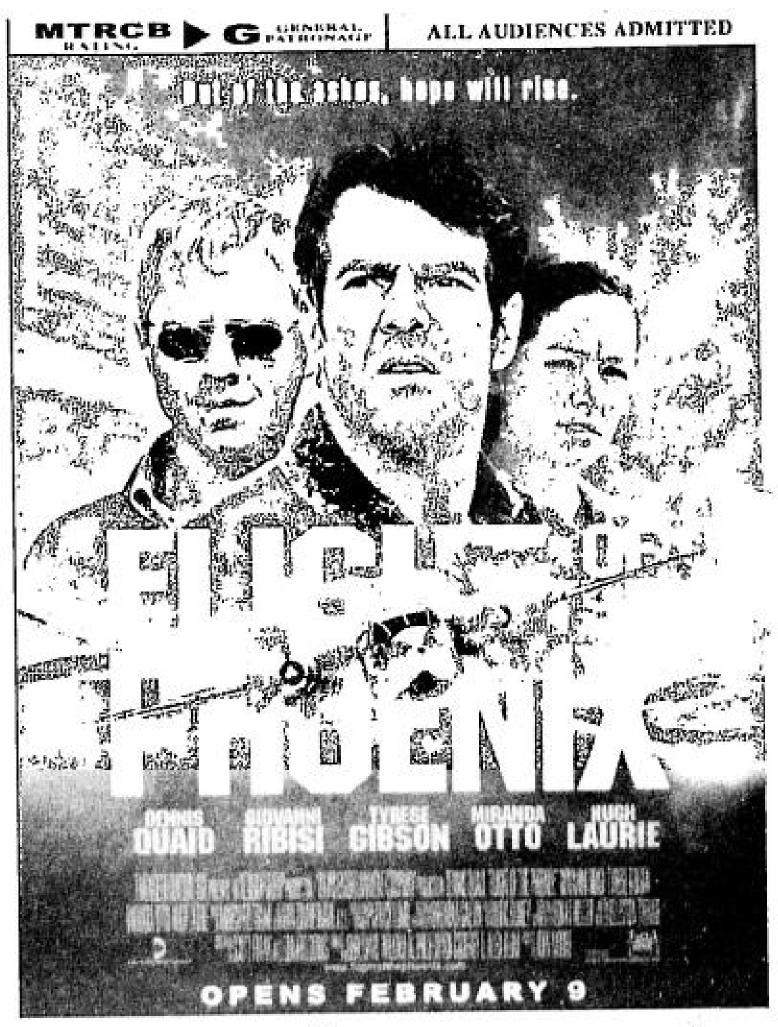
MTRCB RATING PG-13
$85M SUPER PRODUCTION FROM WARNER BROS.
OPENS FEBRUARY 9
3 ACADEMY AWARDS NOMINATIONS
ART DIRECTION • CINEMATOGRAPHY • ORIGINAL SONG
3 GOLDEN GLOBE NOMINATIONS
BEST PICTURE • BEST ACTRESS • BEST ORIGINAL SONG
Andrew Lloyd Webber's classic tale of terror, mystery and romance, seen by over 8 million people worldwide, comes to the big screen for the first time.
The PHANTOM of the OPERA
WARNER BROS. PICTURES


NOW SHOWING
MTRCB RATING G ALL AGES ARE ADMITTED
Richard Gere Jennifer Lopez Susan Sarandon
A new comedy about following your own lead.
Shall we Dance?
www.Miramax.com
MIRAMAX
Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures

CHINA
CRISIS

BINONDO INVADES ROCKWELL
Wushu and Tai-chi Exhibition • Lion and Dragon Dance
Feng Shui Consultation • Little Chinatown
FEBRUARY 1 TO 13

POWER PLANT MALL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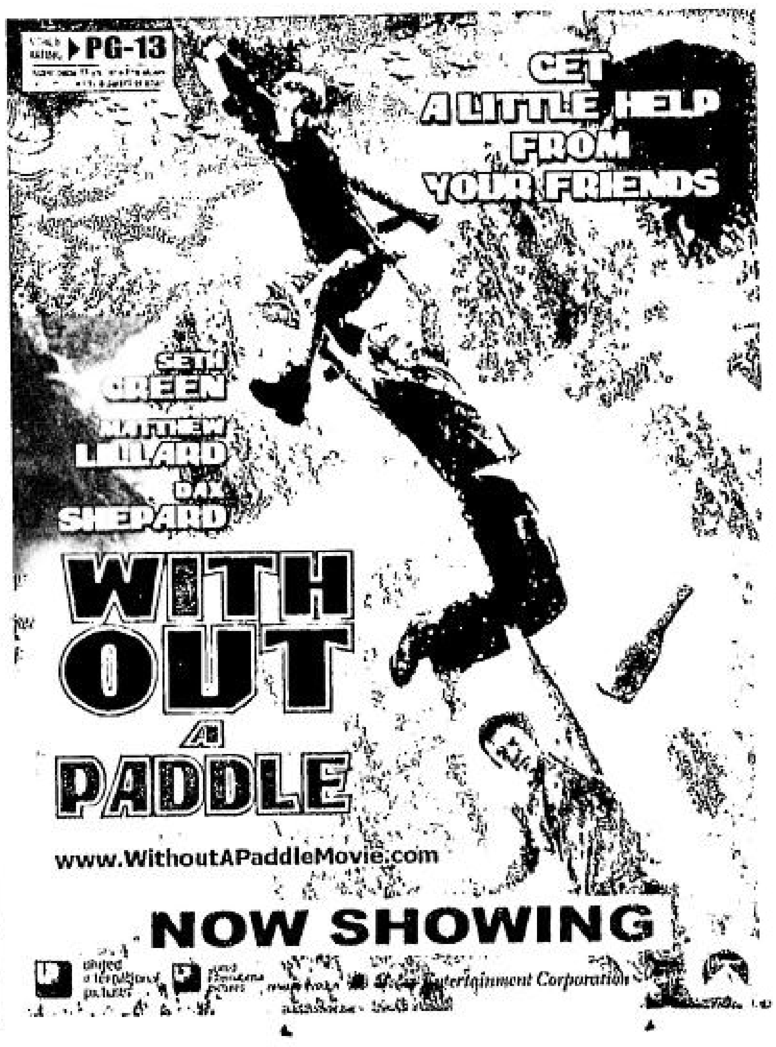
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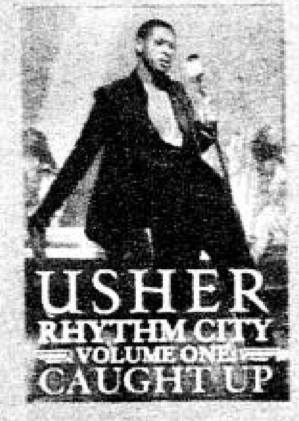
Simple Things	Usher	SIMPLETHINGS
Nice and Slow	Usher	NICENSLOW
You Make Me Wanna	Usher	MAKEMEWANA
My Way	Usher	MY WAY



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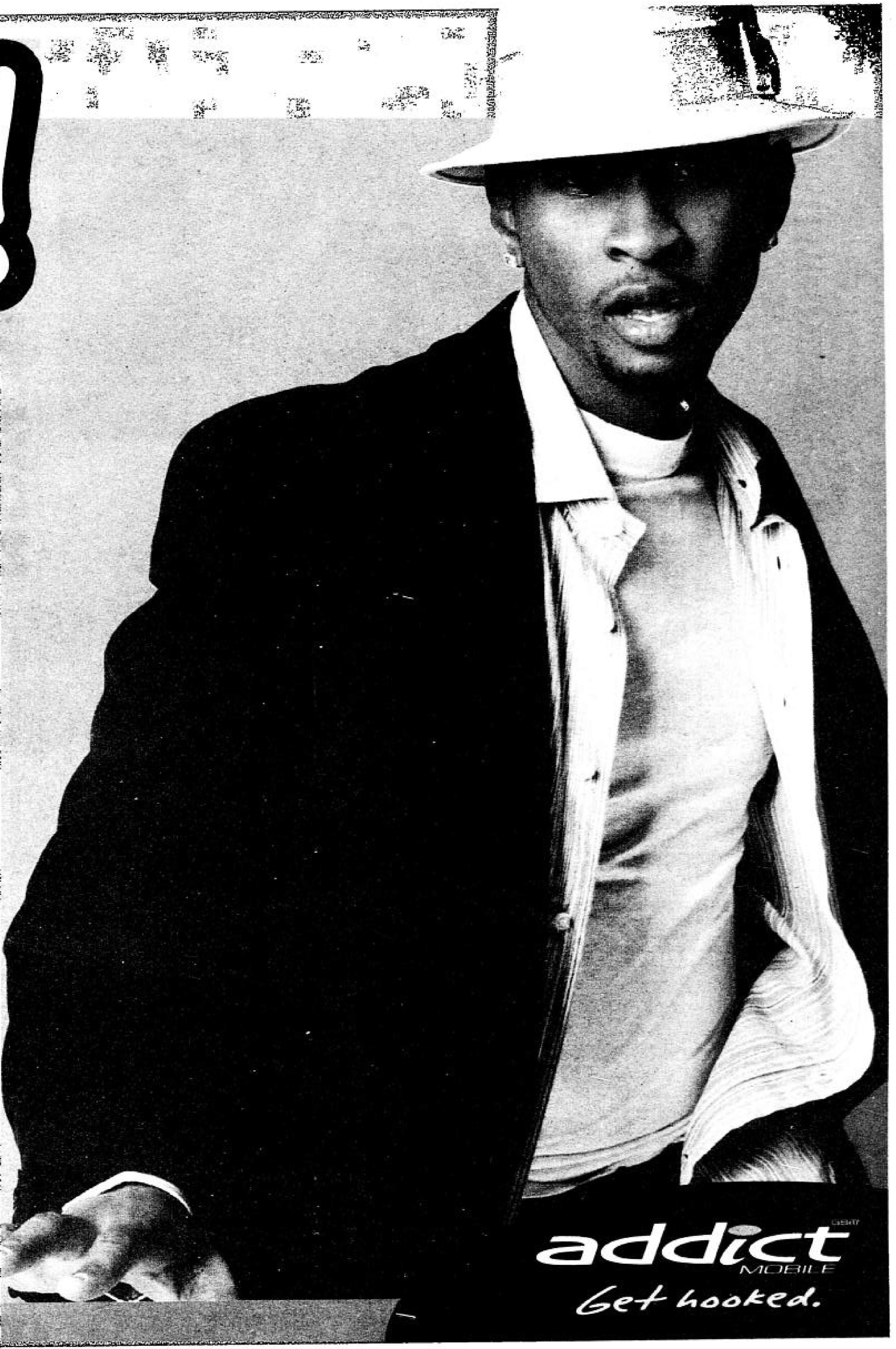

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Ben Yalung defies formula in 'Ang Birhen ng Manaoag'

By Remy Umerez

FELEO. Portrays the Blessed Virgin Mary.

IN this age of commercialism, religious films are a rarity—and that makes them really special. No wonder viewers reward them with their grateful patronage:

Hollywood hotshot Mel Gibson gambled on in his controversial "The Passion of Christ." The film now ranks as 2004's box-office champion.

Faith

On the local film front, producer Ben Yalung also believes that faith can move mountains, and wants to use the cinema as an effective tool to enlighten people.

Since his conversion, Ben has chosen to produce and direct spiritually inspiring films like "Ama Namin," "Divine Mercy" (Story of Sister Faustina) and "Kristo."

Ben believes that films touch people's lives the same way that faith moves the spirit to overcome the odds.

"Modern-day miracles come in the guise of life's daily trials. The concept of miracles has never changed, it is the people who have changed. Perhaps modern-day miracles don't seem to happen because we fail to discern them when they unfold in our daily lives. We have become much too dependent on logic. In the process, we have lost faith," he observes.

Having done movies about God the Father and God the Son, Yalung feels the time has come to pay homage to the Blessed Virgin Mary. A Marian devotee, he has found the apparitions and miracles of the Blessed Virgin of Manaoag the perfect subject to explore.

Apparitions

The apparitions of the Virgin in Pangasinan date back to the early Spanish colonial era, but public awareness of them has peaked only in the last decade.

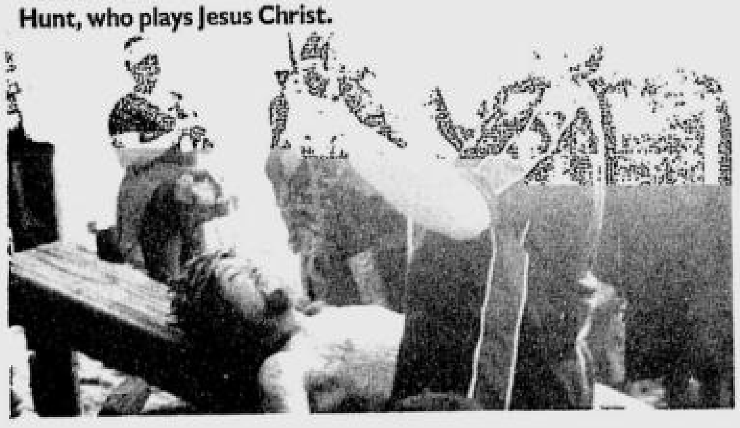
Interest in the apparitions was heightened in the wake of a series of tragedies like the MV Doña Paz and MV Don Juan sea mishaps, the 1990 earthquake, the Pinatubo eruption, the Ormoc flashfloods, and the social ills that beleaguer the country.

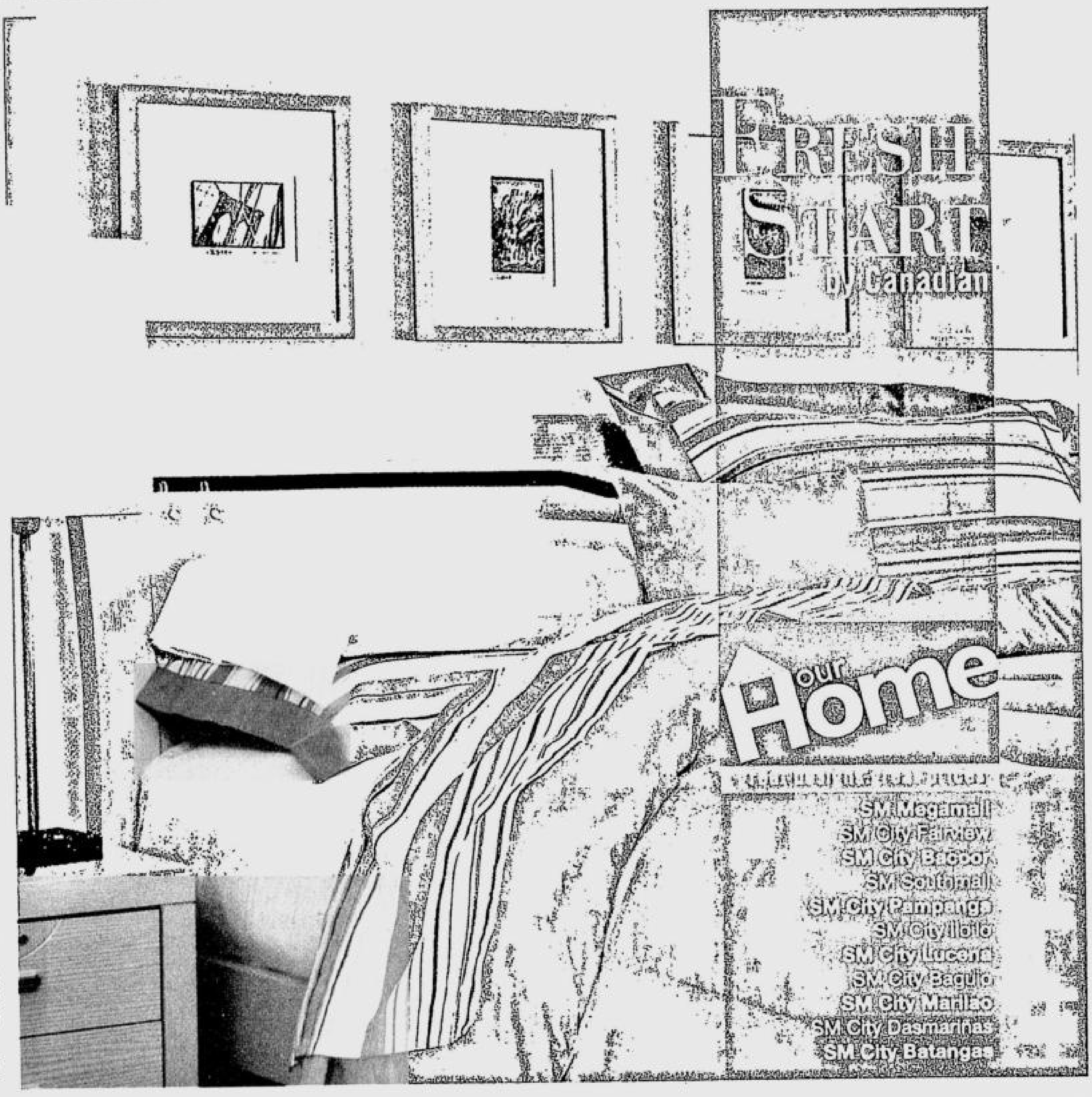
The movie "Ang Birhen ng Manaoag" is a trilogy of authenticated miracles.

Yalung recalls unexplainable occurrences while filming "Ang Birhen ng Manaoag." "One

BEN/ A4-2

YALUNG directs Matthew Hunt, who plays Jesus Christ.

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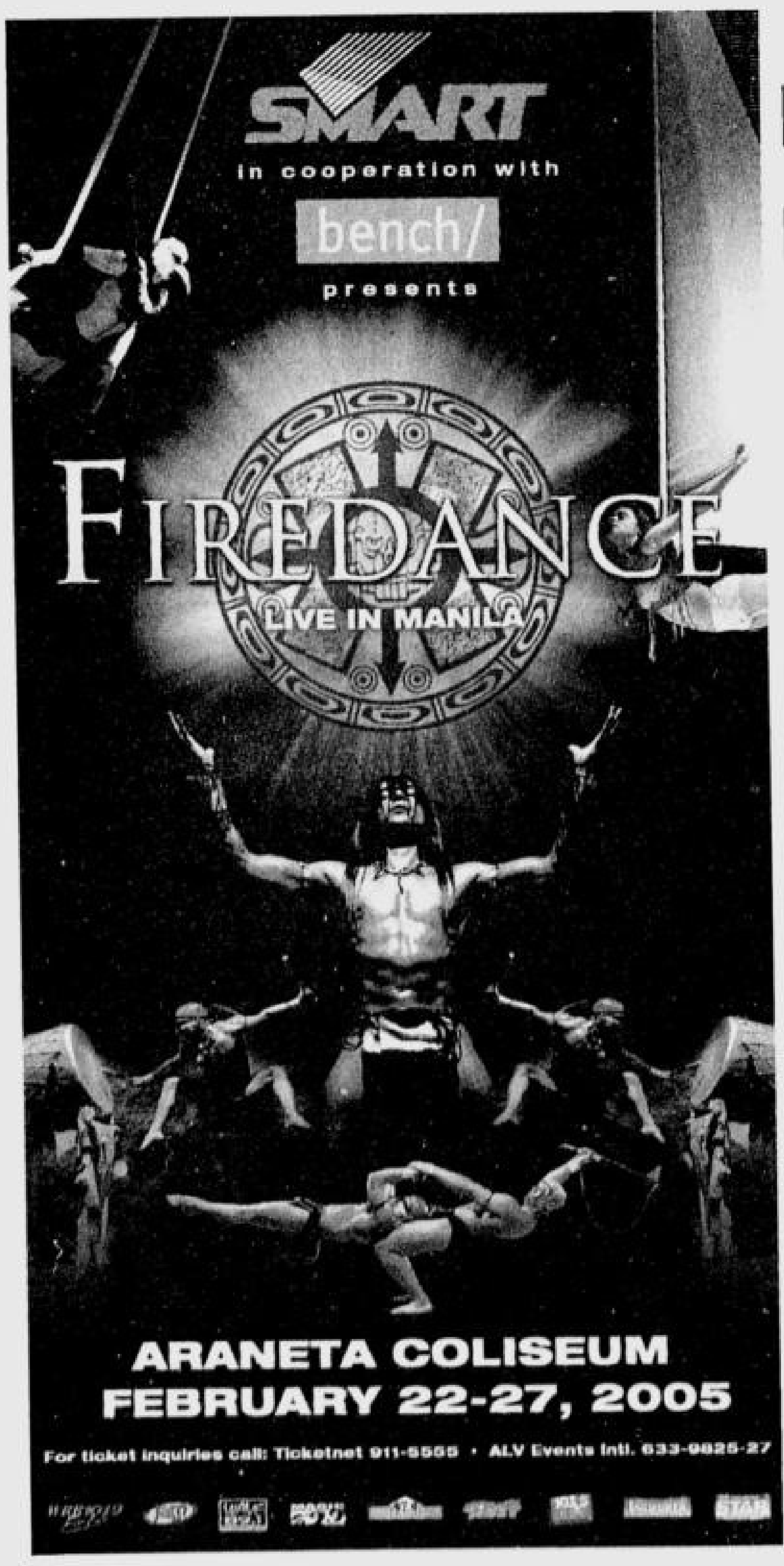
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"The girls like them chocolate brown". Remi Bonnet, a brilliant performer of Chopin, outrages his family and his teacher when he gives up an international career to play the music he has loved- Cuban music. In a city where most undocumented aliens want to become French, Remi Bonnet deliberately takes on the identity, accent and dark complexion of Felipe, his Cuban friend in order to blend into the Paris latino community and to teach Salsa dancing at the Casa Cubana...this is where he meets Nathalie, a shy girl who becomes a bomb on the dance floor.

TODAY
SM SOUTHMALL • FAIRVIEW

Get started with the "Salsa Fever" as it heats up SM Cinemas!

What makes Paris Hilton tick?

By Nestor U. Torre

ENTERTAINMENT reporters were thrown for a loop recently when a gossip columnist in the States announced that, from here on in, he would stop writing about Paris Hilton. Why? Because he had gotten fed up with her shallow, irritating, rich-bitch, bimbo ways, which, he believed, polluted the global show biz environment.

Did he really believe that, all by her lonesome, Paris had the power to negatively affect the show business world's ozone layer, and launch a destructive entertainment tsunami that would lay waste to large parts of the planet? He did.

Malevolent

But, Paris Hilton isn't the only malevolent creature spawned by the entertainment industry, as viewers of local show biz talk shows can grimly attest. Should they be made pariahs as well? —Hey, that *could* be a good idea!

Back to Paris Hilton: We recently viewed her and Nicole Ritchie's reality show, "Road Trip," on cable TV, and after witnessing her vile antics on the program, we agree that she should be spanked on her tight, little butt. —On second thought, let's not, the spoiled heiress might enjoy it.

Perhaps we should make her gargle with laundry detergent? Exile her to the North Pole dressed only in a thong? Refuse to speak her name and instead, refer to her as The Artist Who Used to Be Named After a Hotel in France?

HILTON. No respect for the poor and faceless people she interacted with.

What has the celebrity world's "P.H. factor" done to merit such scathing disdain and hatred?

On the "Road Trip" telecast we viewed, she and Nicole were required to work in a fast food outlet, where they proceeded to flout every rule of work, conduct and decorum in the employees' handbook:

They insulted their co-workers and customers, serves inedible food, clogged up the outlet's frying machines, messed up their mascot costumes, gave motorists the dirty finger, terrorized children, put up signs on the store's marquee that bristled with cuss words—etc.!

Shock

Why did they behave so obnoxiously? Because they hated having to do "menial" work, despite the huge talent fees that the show was paying them. Because they had no respect for the poor and faceless people they interacted with. Because their idea of a rip-roaring good time was to shock everybody.

So, why did the show allow them to be so horrid? Because its producers knew that viewers would watch the program so they would get shocked in turn, and the entire experience would confirm their kneejerk notion that all little celebrities and heiresses are bitches who should be exiled to the North Pole dressed only in thongs.

That generates high ratings? It does. Just goes to show how easy it is to manipulate television's vapid viewership.

Strong sentiments

One question: If shows like "Road Trip" make viewers hate Paris so much, how come they don't have such strong sentiments against Nicole Ritchie? —Because she really isn't Paris' partner in crime, she's more like Paris' lady-in-waiting or *alalay*, so nobody pays her much mind.

A final recollection before we all consign P.H. to oblivion: Some months back, she guested on "Saturday Night Live," and Jimmy Fallon did a spoof interview of her, in which he "mistook" her body parts for some architectural features of the Paris Hilton—the building, not the hot little heiress. And, you know what? Ms Paris gamely played along with the running gag, and allowed Fallon to make massive fun of her.

Maybe she did it because he was cute and hot, but that mock interview showed that, hey, maybe there's hope for her yet?

Piano concert for a very good cause

By Behn Cervantes

A FEW months ago, Cora Veneracion of UP's College of Social Work and Community Development (CSWCD) asked me to direct Estrella Alfron's "Bigas" to raise funds for a foundation in my sister Esther's honor.

She was a longtime faculty member of the college and, for three terms, served as the college secretary. She was recognized with a "Gawad Parangal ng UP Diliman Para sa Katangi-tanging Guro" in 1992: "For high quality and dedicated service to the university, and for her outstanding performance in social work."

In 1981, she was cited by the ISWCD for her priceless contributions:

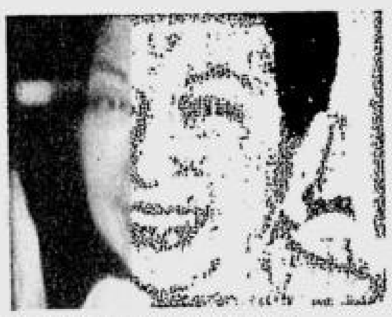
Excellence

"Esther Cervantes Viloria is cited for two decades of dedicated service as a teacher. Her creativity and abiding commitment to the cause of professional social work education has set standards of excellence for her colleagues and students."

"You are my professional model," Evelina A. Pangalangan told her.

In 1955, she received the Professional Regulation Commission's Professional Award.

After two weeks of rehearsals, I realized that the college could not gather the cast we needed. The people behind the show were having a difficult time putting it up, given the logistical demands. In the end, they would not make the needed money for the planned foundation. Instead, I suggested a piano concert featuring Nena del Rosario Villanueva, a family friend and one of our best concert pianists.


VILLANUEVA. Decades of consummate artistry and dedication.

After all, music has always been an important part of Esther's life. She trained in piano extensively enough and became an adept accompanist of church choirs. Nena immediately agreed when I asked her to perform.

Family

Esther's first piano teacher was Gertudes Hautea, Nena's mother. *Tita* Tuding was a UP College of Music graduate. When she married Mariano del Rosario, the couple raised their family in Iloilo.

My family also lived in Iloilo because my father had been assigned to manage the PNB branch there just before the war broke out. Rachel, Lydia and Esther, my three elder sisters, were all piano students of *Tita* Tuding. Not long after, Nena was acclaimed as a piano prodigy, and later, a world-class concert pianist.

Mr. Del Rosario was also connected with the Philippine National Bank, so our families became close. Decades after our stay in Iloilo, we still kept in touch and treated each other like family. For a while, both families were based in New York. Naturally, whenever I saw Nena, I would also remember *Tita* Tuding and *Tito* Marianing.

Some years back, I saw a familiar-looking lady at the UP College of Music. I asked who she was. Ruby Kelly Mangahas, then the college dean, informed me that she was Nena Villanueva's mother. "*Tita* Tuding!," I exclaimed, and quickly introduced myself to her.

Theater

I was rather surprised that she knew I was involved in theater. She asked about the family and Lydia, who had the talent and temperament, but *not* the discipline for the art of piano-playing. Esther was more focused.

In 1995, I was chair of the cultural committee of the Philippine Independence Day celebration in New York. I included in my lineup of artistic activities a piano concert by the Ivory Mafia, a quintet of fine pianists that included Nena.

Through decades of consummate work and dedication, she has developed into an artist of high regard, a fine teacher—and an adept bridge player.

On Feb. 18, Friday, at 5 p.m. at the Abelardo Hall in UP Diliman, Nena and Jiovianney Emmanuel Cruz will hold a benefit concert for the Esther C. Viloria Endowment Fund for the College of Social Work and Community Development's Field Instruction program.

Call 929-2477 or 924-2143.

Acknowledging our limitations

HOW does a fallen person rise up from a hellish condition? Let me tell you the true story of a young man who became a drug addict and experienced real misery:

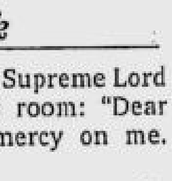
Although his parents were preachers of wisdom, he was not inclined to listen to good advice. They introduced him to a spiritual teacher, but he rejected the opportunity.

Habit

Thinking that he knew how to live, he gambled his life away. He married young, and sired a child. Pretty soon, he was lured into the drug scene, then he started stealing to support his habit. He landed in jail, where he contracted tuberculosis.

Materially and spiritually bankrupt, he felt down and out. His wife took their child and left him. Out of extreme desperation, he wrote prayers to the Supreme Lord on the walls of his room: "Dear God, please have mercy on me. Help me!"

LOTUS POND



R. Valencia and S. Bismark

His parents sent him to a remote island where there were no drugs. He started praying and meditating, and found shelter and refuge.

Not only did his physical health slowly improve, but even his spiritual life grew by leaps and bounds.

Like a dead person coming back to life, he became a positive influence on the people around him. His example became an inspiration to others.

Forgiveness and mercy

By sincerely begging for forgiveness and mercy from the Supreme Being, he found redemption and rose above his misery.

My spiritual teacher once said: "When you take one step toward God, He will take a hundred steps toward you. You may reject God, but He will never reject you."

A person can always rise again after a fall. But, our limited strength and ability are not enough. Only through humility and acceptance of our limitations are we able to recognize real problems. When we acknowledge our need for help, there's always Someone who will help us find the way.

Email lotuspond108@hotmail.com

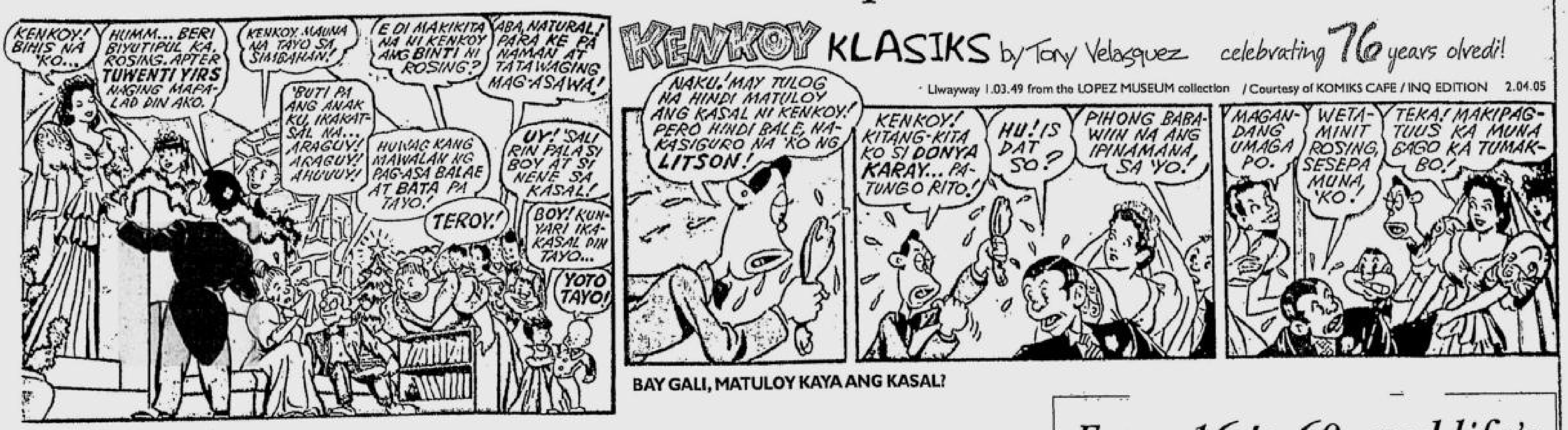
Ben Yalung defies formula . . .

From page A4-1

time, we prayed with roses in our hands. After the prayer, we discovered that the petals had dried up, and we saw imprints of images that human hands couldn't draw," he relates.

"Birhen ng Manaoag" stars Eddie Garcia, Albert Martinez, Joyce Jimenez, Cherry Pie Picache and Jean Garcia, together with Jodi Santamaria, Marco Alcaraz, beautiful and talented new actress Ina Feleo as the Blessed Virgin Mary and Matthew Hunt as Jesus Christ.

Yalung directs from a script by Christian Vallez. "Birhen ng Manaoag" will be screened during the Lenten season.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KENKOY MAUNA NA TAYO SA SIMBAHAN!
'BUTI PA ANG ANAK KU, IKAKATSAL NA... ARAGUY! ARAGUY! AHUUUY!
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BAY GALI, MATULOY KAYA ANG KASAL?

No romance between 'Lovers in Paris' stars

FROM Jay Anne Tolentino: "I love the actress who played Vivian on 'Lovers in Paris.' Is she married to the actor who played Carlo on the Korean soap?"

SHOW BIZ Q & A

Rito P. Asilo

Vivian, the female protagonist of "Lovers in Paris," was played by Kim Jung Eun, Seoul's answer to Hollywood's romantic-comedy sweetheart, Sandra Bullock.

Before Kim's international cachet was boosted by the immense popularity of "Lovers," she had a propitious albeit artistically lightweight start via the box-office pleaser, "Funny Movie" (2002), a popcorn farce that parodied Korean films and TV shows.

Box-office gold

Not long after "Funny Movie" hit box-office gold, Kim's follow-up flick, the mob-comedy smash, "Marrying the Mafia," was released and eventually became Korea's topgrossing film. (Warner Brothers recently snapped up its rights for a Hollywood reworking.)

KIM Jeung Eun and Park Shin Yang have mutual respect for each other.

Then, she starred in "Spring Breeze" and the Venice filmfest entry, "Mr. Butterfly."

Last year, "Lovers in Paris" became so popular that it enjoyed syndication in countries across Asia. A Japanese TV network bought the series for an impressive sum equivalent to P35 million—the highest amount ever paid for a Korean drama!

Kim's latest film is another romantic comedy, "How to Keep My Love." In most of her movies, she plays frivolous characters, mousy lab technicians or insecure waifs who get their Prince Charmings in the end. Kim will turn 30 next month.

On the other hand, "Lovers in Paris'" Carlo was portrayed by 36-year-old heartthrob Park Shin Yang. Yes, he *is* married—but not to Kim. He met his wife of three years at a hotel gym. After a whirlwind romance, Park tied the knot with his beautiful—but pregnant!—bride, amidst media frenzy and fan hysteria. Some love story, huh?

Debut

"Yuri" (1996), his film debut, earned him multiple Blue Dragon awards including best actor, best new actor and most popular male actor.

Since then, the Russia-trained thespian has starred in more than a dozen films, including "White Valentine" and the horror flick, "The Uninvited," which was shown here last year.

His latest film, Choi Dong-Hun's "The Big Swindle," recently earned him a best actor nomination at the Korean Oscars. Park has jazz and ballet training—and he loves to sing.

When asked to comment about the enormous success of "Lovers," Park says: "We attribute it to my great chemistry with Kim."

Park and Kim respect each other. During the shooting of the series, the duo discussed scenes before the actual take: "Those discussions really helped me figure out Vivian's character," Kim explains.

Modified version

Kim likens "Lovers'" story to a modified version of Cinderella. She observes: "Vivian was also poor, but she was strong-willed. She often made mistakes because she was very passionate."

Park and Kim loved their characters. So, when the series was about to end, Kim was very vocal about wanting to give Vivian and Carlo a fitting farewell: "I wanted the series to have a bright, happy ending," she recalls. She got her wish.

(Re-runs of "Lovers in Paris" are shown Saturdays and Sundays at 11:30 a.m. on ABS-CBN.)

From 16 to 60, and life's lessons in between

By Boots Anson Roa

(Conclusion)

A FEW years ago, while lining up my husband Pete's wheelchair at the airport's handicapped section, an ailing old lady hailed me from her wheelchair. She embraced me and introduced herself as my first boyfriend's mother.

PETE AND BOOTS ROA. Marriage and parenthood teach lessons in forgiveness.

Between sobs, she confessed how she regretted what happened 35 years past and apologized profusely.

She blamed herself for her son's demise, and affirmed that, had she not gotten in the way, he probably would not have concealed his illness and would still be alive today.

Wrong turn

I was truly humbled by that experience. It was one of my greatest lessons in forgiveness. It brought to mind how God forgives us at every wrong turn, even before we ask Him to.

Marriage and parenthood teach lessons in forgiveness, the kind that is easier to bestow because we give it unconditionally to people we love.

But, try forgiving people who are purportedly your friends, yet have betrayed your trust. Or worse, enemies who watch out for every wrong turn you take.

The easiest lessons are those borne out of physical pain. Modern medicine and technology have gifted us with relief and cure.

But, the pain that challenges healing is the pain that the suffering of a helpless or ailing—loved one etches into our soul.

Apart from lessons of Faith, Love and Forgiveness, my other great lesson is that of Humor, the kind that teaches us not only to laugh at the jokes of others but to self-deprecate when the joke is on us.

False humility

Only those armed with a sense of confidence and security can put themselves down—though never in false humility—to favor others. It eases us in tense and embarrassing situations. Most importantly, it releases us unhurt and unruffled.

The last lesson I wish to share is the lesson of Giving. Long before reaching 60, we have to learn that it is best to forget the *good* we have given, and remember that which we owe.

'Obnoxious' finale for reality TV show

By Nestor U. Torre

LAST Friday, Jan. 28, we were idly channel-surfing when our attention was called by the finale episode of "My Big Fat Obnoxious Fiance" on Star World. From time to time, we've caught odd segments of the reality TV show, but were never interested enough to watch a full show. Well, since this was the program's finale, we decided to finally see it from beginning to end.

We knew from previous viewing that the show had a man and a woman *pretending* to be in love and deciding to get married. They had to fool their relatives into believing that their wedding was for real.

Match

Not only that, their relatives had to approve of the match, or at least not protest and thus prevent the wedding from taking place. This was made difficult by the man's being instructed by the show's producer to behave in as obnoxious a manner as possible (hence the program's title).

If the "couple" managed to pull off the monumental marital scam, they would each make $250,000, and their respective families would each get a similar amount (to mollify them for having been fooled in so awesome a fashion).

Well, as the final episode unfolded, the bride's relatives were having huge second thoughts about the nuptials. For some moments there, it was touch-and-go if the ceremonies would be permitted to proceed by her extremely unhappy loves ones.

But, after those agonizingly suspenseful moments, the bride's relatives glumly held their tongues, and the bride and groom were about to pledge their troth—when something really unexpected took place: The groom nervously "confessed" that the wedding was a sham, and *he* couldn't go through with it!

Bombshell

Well, that bombshell of an announcement shocked the bride and everybody else—except the show's producers, who it turned out had planned this outcome from the very start.

In fact, the man had another astounding announcement to make: Not only was the wedding a sham, but he was also not the person he was supposed to be! He was an actor hired by the show's producers, and the members of his "family" were also actors, and they had been made to play their roles in the spurious wedding to fool everybody else, the bride included.

Well, you can imagine how shocked and hurt the bride and her loved ones were. But, they finally got over their hurt feelings when a *third* big announcement was made: they were getting a total of $1 million for their pains!

Thin line

Thus did the show try to navigate the thin line between emotional exploitation and generous gratification, by stressing the fact that the entire experience was a testament to familial love. OK, fine, but the exploitative aspect of the scam still rankled, even if the bride and her family ended up thinking that the financial bonanza they got made everything worthwhile.

Sure, a million bucks—in dollars yet—is a lot of money, but the program still ended up being pretty obnoxious in its own way. Sure glad *that's* over! And we hope they don't have a sequel in the works.

Pops is stylishness personified

By Mary Ann A. Bautista

POPS Fernandez admits that she works hard for her two sons, Robin and Ram. "When drastic changes happen in our family, I consult them right away before they hear about it from somebody else. Call it a mother's touch. I'm grateful that they're growing up into polite, intelligent and mature young men," Pops beams.

FERNANDEZ. Her outfits depend on her mood.

When she goes malling with her sons, they go to Pancake House or Sugi. Aside from her career and sons, her other passions are clothes and traveling. "I like to browse when I shop, but if I see something that I really like, I buy it without thinking of the price," she confesses. No wonder she's always well-dressed.

Trendy

How would she define her style? "Personal style should be comfortable, not contrived. It's also a matter of simplicity and understated elegance. I like to wear clothes that are casual. Occasionally though, I want to be trendy and hip, especially with my hair."

"I'm *maarte*! I want to look good all the time, to be glamorous. People watch you because they want to see how you tried to look good for them," she opines.

Pops is keen on coordination: Her outfit has to match her shoes and accessories. But, her outfit depends on her mood. "There are days *na*, even if I don't go out, I still want to be dressed. Sometimes, I change twice or thrice before I leave the house. I love wearing pants," she adds.

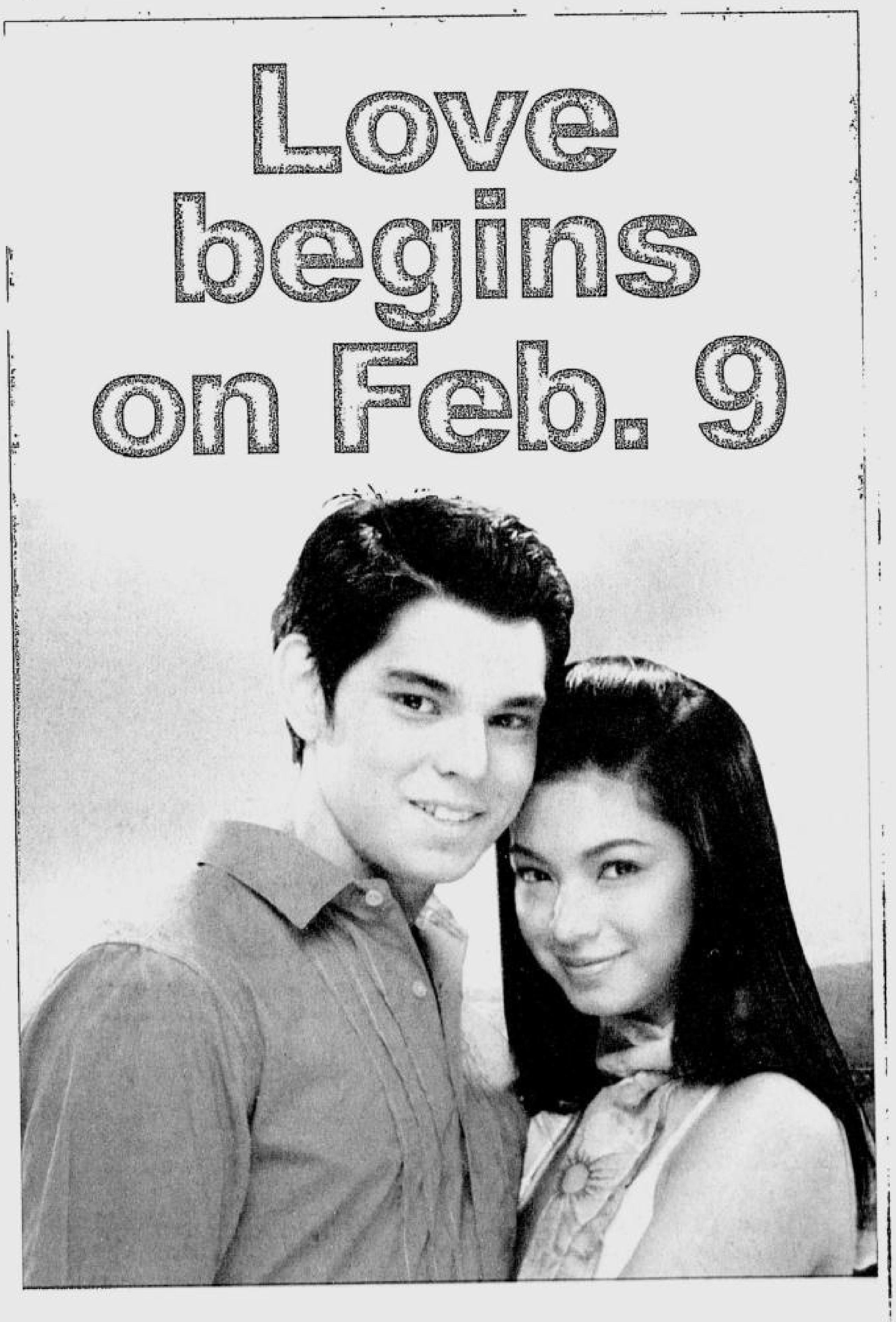
She has also learned to love acting, but admits that doing a soap can be emotionally taxing. "You have to sustain your emotions, you cry and suffer as your character does. When you do soaps, there's a lot of waiting involved. You have to come prepared, because you don't know what's going to happen next.

"On the other hand, singers are always prompt. We get the job done, then we leave. If I were to rate them, I'd prefer singing, hosting and acting—in that order."

First time

Pops is excited about her Valentine show, "Queens on Fire," with Regine Velasquez at the Ultra. She recalls: "Performing abroad, we bonded, we ate and shopped together. *Masamang kasama si* Regine *sa* shopping. *Kasi ako, si* Ms Practical. *Si* Regine, *hindi nagsusukat ng damit.* When we were in Europe, we rode this huge bus. *Tapos, doon na kami naglagay ng* make-up while we were trading stories."

Pops has already realized many of her dreams. But, she still has some goals left: to write scripts and direct!



New fright flick from Japan

MONTAGE

NEW and deadly viral strains like SARS, bird flu and meningococcemia have been giving people cause to worry these days. Another frightening albeit fictive possibility now comes from Japanese producer Taka Ichise, who brought the popular "J-Horror" series to the screen, with fright flicks like "Ringu" (Ring), "Ring O," "Dark Water" and "Ju-On" ("The Grudge" 1 and 2).

Ichise's new production, "Infection," takes place in an old, dilapidated hospital.

Danger threatens when paramedics wheel in a patient stricken with a mysterious viral strain. By the time the patient has been attended to, his internal organs have been eaten up. Then, he slips out of the hospital, exposing the entire population to grave danger.

Millions of lives are threatened as the patient walks the streets. Will scientists find a way to combat the mysterious virus before it decimates the populace?

"INFECTION." Taka Ichise's latest medical thriller.

Hallmark's February specials

Love is in the air as the Hallmark Channel screens these romantic films: Feb. 6, "Love's Enduring Promise" dramatizes the triumphs and travails of a pioneering clan.

Feb. 13, "Just Desserts" has two chefs discovering a mutual passion, and the perfect recipe for success and romance.

Feb. 14, "I Do (But I Don't)" is about a wedding consultant (Denise Richards) whose boss (Jessica Walter) gets all the credit for the great weddings she coordinates. When a handsome fireman (Dean Cain) comes into her life, the wedding consultant discovers that life and love can't be impeccably planned.

Feb. 20, "The Trail to Hope Loss" stars Lou Diamond Phillips as a former outlaw who makes peace with his past, but gets into trouble with a corrupt rancher.

Feb. 27, "Vinegar Hill" is about the lies that bind and destroy a family, and the truth that shall set them free. Mary-Louise Parker leads the cast.

LAUREN HOLLY AND COSTAS MANDYLOR. Topbill the romantic comedy, "Just Desserts."

WATSON. British tenor performs at PICC on Feb. 10.

Movies on TV

On HBO, Feb. 5 at 5:30 p.m., "Multiplicity." 9 p.m., "Lost in Translation." Feb. 6 at 12:20 p.m., "Analyze That." 9:55 p.m., "Minority Report." Feb. 7 at 1 p.m., "White Oleander." 7:25 p.m., "Clueless." 10:30 p.m., "Babe." 1:55 a.m., "Frances." Feb. 8 at 1:45 p.m., "Gattaca." 12:10 a.m., About Schmidt." Feb. 9 at 3:45 p.m., "Punch-Drunk Love."

On Cinemax, Feb. 5 at 9 a.m., "Altered Stories." 10:40 a.m., "Orange County." 1:45 p.m., "Dolores Claiborne." Feb. 6 at 9 p.m., "Empire of the Sun." 4:15 a.m., "Bonnie and Clyde." Feb. 7 at 7:45 a.m., "Splendor in the Grass." 6:45 p.m., "The Age of Innocence." 1:50 a.m., "Giant." Feb. 8 at 9:30 a.m., " A Man for All Seasons." Feb. 9 at 9:30 a.m., "The Godfather."

Russell Watson in Manila

British tenor Russell Watson performs in Manila in "An Evening with The Voice" at 8 p.m. on Feb. 10 at the PICC Plenary Hall. Russell will sing favorite classical pieces from his double platinum albums: "The Voice," "Encore" and "Reprise," and his latest compilation, "Amore Musica."

Russell's repertoire includes "Fanfare for the Common Man," "Granada," "Santa Lucia," "Ave Maria," "Panis Angelicum," Intermezzo from "Amor Ti Vieta," Overture from "Le Nozze Di Figaro," "Les Toreadors," "O Sole Mio," "Volare," "The Prayer" with Ima Castro, "Caruso," "Core Ingrato," "Loveliest Night of the Year" and "Nessun Dorma." Call 891-9999.

30 shows feted on 'A.S.A.P.'

By Noelani Torre

LOCAL television variety shows don't exactly top our must-watch list. But, ABS-CBN's weekend variety show, "A.S.A.P.," promised viewers various feats of entertainment in last week's episode, so we thought we ought to at least take a look.

Of course, one should always take our local channels' self-hype with a grain (make that a block) of salt. Just because they tell us that their production is "the biggest show on earth" doesn't mean that it's going to be—but it does indicate that we're probably going to see more celebrities, more performance numbers, and generally just more of everything.

Format

The first thing we noticed was that there were *many* people. We thought that it was because the show was supposed to be special, but then we were reminded that "A.S.A.P." in its usual format already boasts of multiple hosts and mainstays. And we thought you only needed a host or two to keep things going!

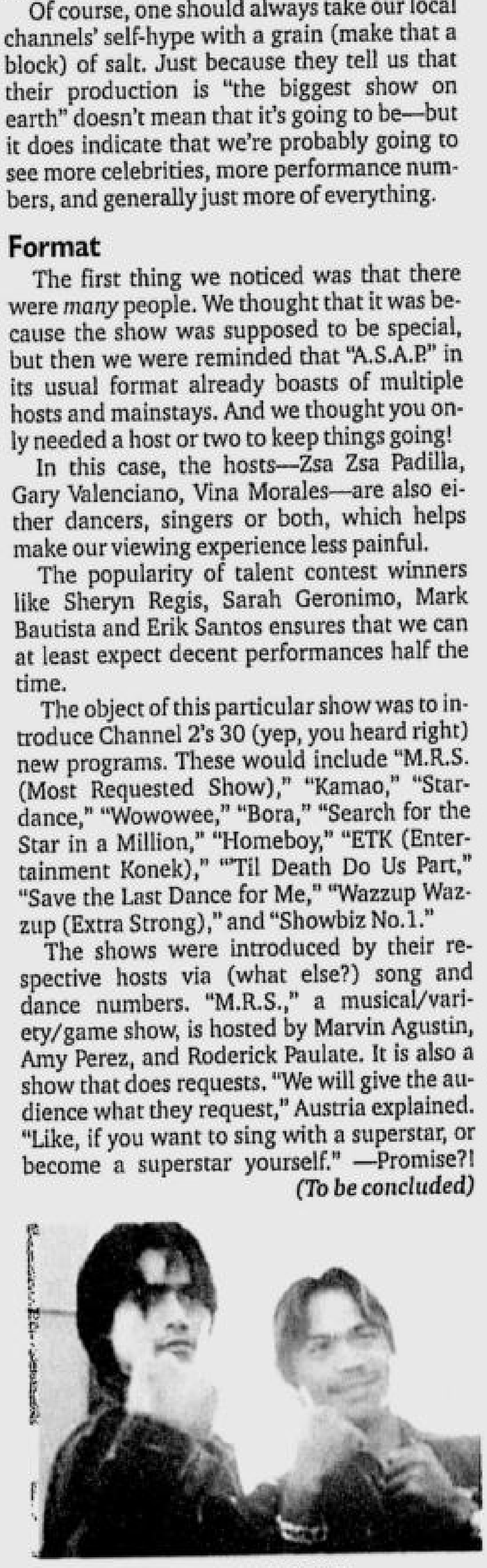
In this case, the hosts—Zsa Zsa Padilla, Gary Valenciano, Vina Morales—are also either dancers, singers or both, which helps make our viewing experience less painful.

The popularity of talent contest winners like Sheryn Regis, Sarah Geronimo, Mark Bautista and Erik Santos ensures that we can at least expect decent performances half the time.

The object of this particular show was to introduce Channel 2's 30 (yep, you heard right) new programs. These would include "M.R.S. (Most Requested Show)," "Kamao," "Stardance," "Wowowee," "Bora," "Search for the Star in a Million," "Homeboy," "ETK (Entertainment Konek)," "'Til Death Do Us Part," "Save the Last Dance for Me," "Wazzup Wazzup (Extra Strong)," and "Showbiz No.1."

The shows were introduced by their respective hosts via (what else?) song and dance numbers. "M.R.S.," a musical/variety/game show, is hosted by Marvin Agustin, Amy Perez, and Roderick Paulate. It is also a show that does requests. "We will give the audience what they request," Austria explained. "Like, if you want to sing with a superstar, or become a superstar yourself." —Promise?!

(To be concluded)



ROBIN PADILLA AND MANNY PACQUIAO. Hosts of reality boxing show, "Kamao."

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January inflation rate eases to 8.4%

By Michelle V. Remo

THE INCREASE in consumer prices eased slightly in January to 8.4 percent from 8.6 percent in December as the cost of basic products and services rose marginally in the seasonally slow month of the year, the National Statistics reported yesterday.

The 8.4-percent inflation used 2000 as the base year. The government now uses the year 2000 as a basis in computing inflation and in making its macro-economic assumptions.

Although the increase in prices slowed down, the deceleration was not as fast as the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas expected. The inflation rate for the month was still higher than the 7.8 to 7.9 percent projected by the BSP.

According to the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda), the slowdown in inflation was caused by the deceleration in the inflation of food, fuel and transportation and communication services.

Neda Director General Romulo Neri said in a statement that the deceleration in the inflation rate for food items, especially in Metro Manila, was expected as the holiday season came to a close and as supply recovered from the previous month's typhoons that affected agriculture production.

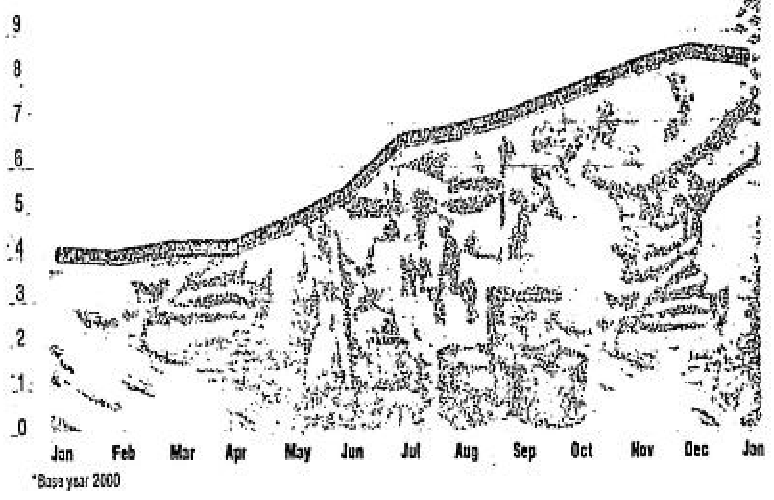
But Neri said the increase in water rates in Metro Manila was one of the major factors that exerted pressure on inflation.

Fuel prices declined by 2.1 percent from the previous month, the first time since March 2004, as the cost of Dubai crude began to soften. As a result, prices of transportation and communication services also went down by 0.1 percent as price discounts on diesel were given to public transport.

The Development Budget Co-

JANUARY/ B2

INFLATION RATES Jan. 2004-Jan. 2005

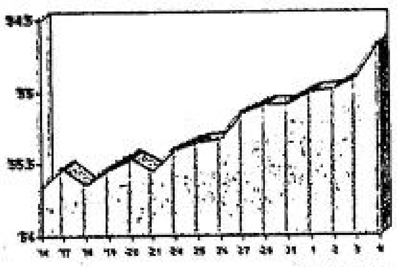


*Base year 2000

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE



₱ 54.68 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., Feb. 4, 2005

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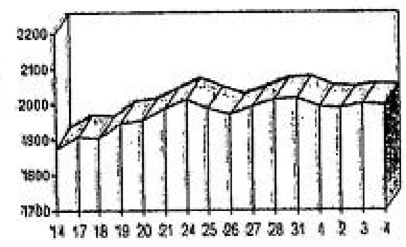
As of 5 p.m., Feb. 4, 2005

GOLD: $ 415.70-416.20
per ounce Hong Kong, Feb. 4, 2005

STOCK MARKET

Shares end lower, blue chips lose

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B3)

SHARES ended marginally lower yesterday, led by losses in blue chips like Ayala Land, Bank of the Philippine Islands and Metrobank, traders said.

"The market is still undergoing a consolidation ahead of the weekend," said AB Capital Securities research director Jose Vistan.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index failed to stay above the 2000-point psychological support, shedding 4.65 points, or 0.2 percent, to close at 1995.57, after rising 0.5 percent Thursday.

All sectoral indicators finished lower, except for the commercial-industrial subindex.

Decliners led gainers 59 to 22, while 43 stocks were unchanged.

Volume expanded to 2.56 billion shares valued at P4.89 billion from Thursday's 1.97 billion shares worth P2.68 billion.

Profit-taking weighed down Ayala Land, which fell 2.2 percent to P9.10; Bank of the Philippine Islands, which lost 0.9 percent to P56, and Metropolitan Bank, which was 1.5 percent lower at P32.

Several stocks, however, were spared from the sell-off. Semirara, the most actively traded stock, closed sharply higher at P48.50 from its previous close of P0.04. *AP*

Mining industry seen as RP's growth engine

THE REVIVED mining industry could be the pivotal growth engine for the country, which has mineral deposits worth about $90.8 billion, officials and industry leaders said yesterday.

Benjamin Philip Romualdez, president of the Philippine Chamber of Mines, told reporters that overseas investors are flocking to the Philippines after the Supreme Court cleared the way for foreigners to fully control large-scale mining operations in the country.

Romualdez said a three-day mining conference, which he helped organize and which ended yesterday, attracted 100 foreign investors who flew in from as far as South Africa and Russia.

"Obviously the reception and the interest in the Philippines was tremendous," he said.

The Philippines ranks third in the world in gold deposits, fourth in copper, fifth in nickel and sixth in chromite deposits. Of the country's total land area of 30 million hectares, about a third has rich metallic mineral deposits, yet only 1.4 percent of that area is presently covered by mining permits, a government briefing paper said.

The identified mineral deposits have been estimated to be worth $90.8 billion at 2004 metal prices but could have a potential value of $840 billion, equal to 10 times the country's gross domestic product, it added.

"We have the potential to be among the 10 largest mining powers in the world. We shouldn't be poor," it quoted President Macapagal-Arroyo as saying. "The Philippines is now poised for an economic take-off based on a reinvigorated mining industry."

Environment Secretary Michael Defensor said the top 23 mining and 37 exploration projects around the country are expected to generate $5 billion to $7 billion in new investments over the next five years.

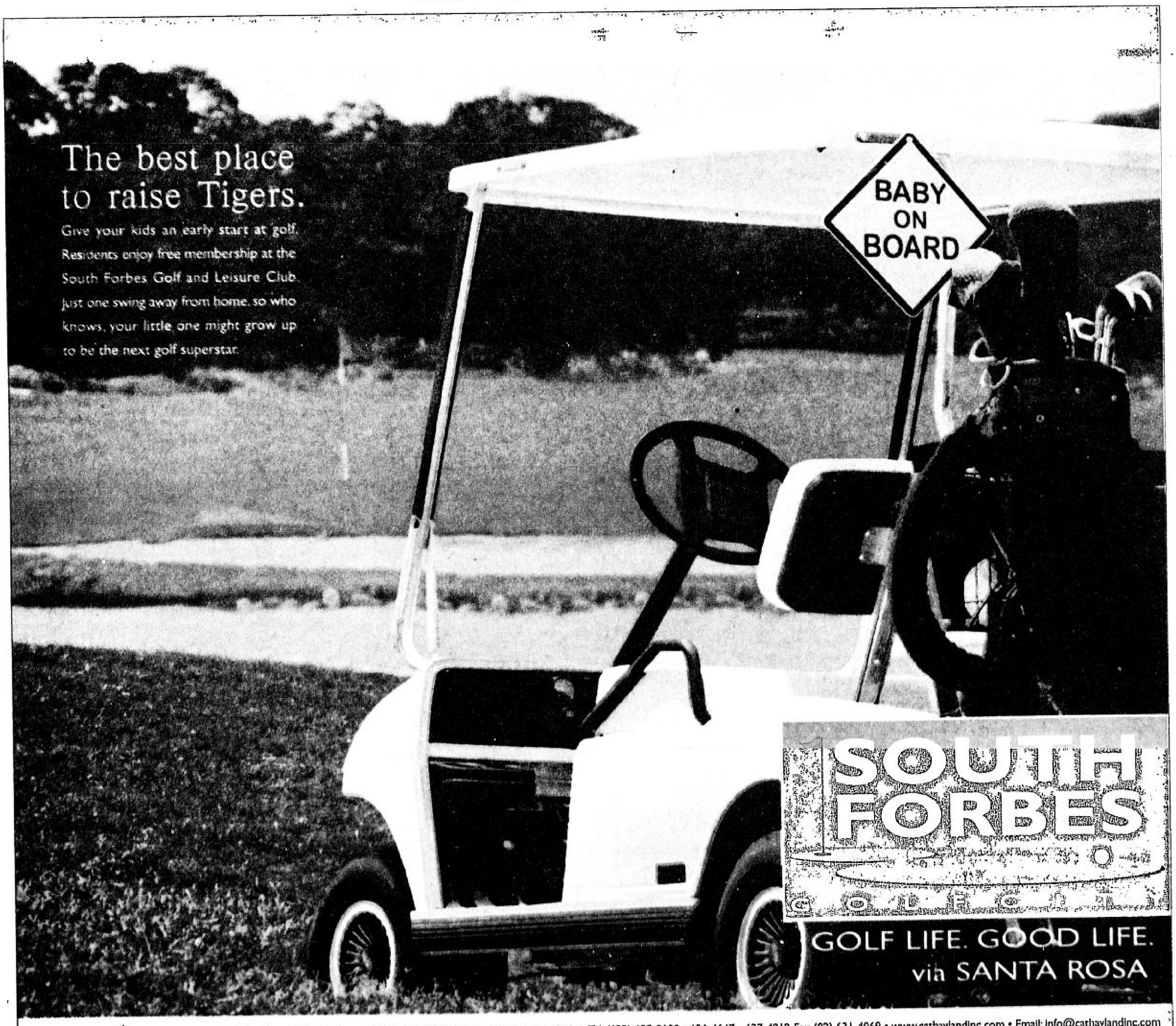
The mining industry could raise P100 billion annually for the government, enough to wipe out the country's fiscal deficit, he added.

The Supreme Court on Wednesday upheld its ruling in December that a law allowing foreign control of local mining operations is constitutional.

The decision helped ease lingering concerns in financial markets that the court might reverse itself and wipe out revived interest in the mining sector, which has helped boost overall market sentiment, and mining stock prices in particular.

Opponents of the mining law say that large-scale mining destroys the environment, endangers the health of the people and displaces indigenous communities.

"Safeguards and safety nets are incorporated in the mining plan, especially pertaining to the environment and to the rights and entitlements of affected communities," Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said in a statement. *AP*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Water under the beige

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

MANILA Water Co., one of the two water service concessionaires in Metro Manila, is almost done with the preparation of its initial public offering, or IPO.

It will be, as the company's officials proudly said over coffee and costly purified water one day, the first-ever public offering of a privatized utility in these parts.

Manila Water is asking the Securities and Exchange Commission for a license to sell some 823.82 million shares to the public. About 273.82 million shares of those will be sold as "secondary offering."

With the offering price ranging from P5 to P6 per share, the company can expect to raise from P4-P5 billion, depending on what price this bullish market can bear.

Now, down here in our barangay, which is under the service area of Manila Water, "public offering" means that ordinary folk like us can own stocks of the company.

On the other hand, "secondary offering" means that, when we buy those stocks, our money will not go to the company. It will go to the existing stockholders instead.

***

AT AN OFFERING price of P5 to P6 per share, therefore, the existing stockholders of Manila Water stand to earn some P1.4 billion to P1.6 billion from the IPO.

How can we fault the stockholders for getting the cash?

Only some eight years after winning in the government bidding for the water service concession, Manila Water is hitting all the targets it promised to the government.

Not only that. The company is hitting them ahead of schedule. Targets for 2007 were already achieved in 2004. Manila Water, in short, is doing swell.

The public, thus, may be more than willing to buy stocks from the stakeholders.

Unlike the other water service concessionaire, the Maynilad of the Lopez group, Manila Water is already making money.

Maybe in this country, we are suckers for businesses that are making money. They seem a rarity.

Anyway, even with the IPO, meaning, after the stockholders sell part of their holdings to the public, they will still control the company, no matter what.

It's obvious that, for the stockholders, it's time to cash in some of their investment chips. It's the only way I can explain the "secondary offering."

Well, according to Manila Water officials, not exactly.

***

YOU SEE, I was wondering out loud to the officials if their company will be better off getting all the cash from the IPO, instead of the P1.5 billion going to stockholders.

After all, Manila Water needs to dive deep into its cash well to finance the infrastructure it must put up in the next few years, if it is serious about wanting to upgrade, and upgrade fast, its service in its wide coverage area.

Almost half of it is still waiting for water distribution service.

And for those who do have something coming out of their faucets, the water is probably beige. All right, brown!

But as the officials condescendingly explained to me, for Manila Water to have all that "equity," the entire P4 to P5 billion from the IPO, is also bad for the company.

And then they went into this technical mumbo-jumbo about financial ratios and all that, something about how "equity" is more costly than borrowing, even if the equity is raised through an IPO.

For the life of me, I cannot figure out why all that IPO money is not desirable to Manila Water. Down here in my barangay, we grew up believing that companies do IPOs, precisely, to raise cheap funding. And this is, precisely, equity—plain and simple.

* * *

BUT the thing is, according to the Manila Water officials, the company also does not want the IPO to, er, "dilute" the existing stockholders—no pun intended.

Okay, dilution is another way of saying "watered down," pun intended this time.

Indeed, the IPO will bring down the ownership of the existing stockholders, as a percentage of the total equity of the company.

So what? All public corporations in this country are still controlled by the biggest stockholders, dilution or no dilution, aren't they?

Well, according to the officials, the creditors of the Manila Water—both the current and the "prospective" ones—actually do not feel comfortable with too much dilution.

It is of course difficult, if not impossible, for us down here to talk to those creditors. I don't even know who they are.

It is therefore quite hard to verify the claim of the Manila Water officials regarding too much equity as being bad for the company.

And all along, I thought there's no such thing as "too much equity" for a borrower of billions upon billions, as far as those who lend money are concerned.

* * *

FOR YOUR info, the existing stockholders of Manila Water are the Ayala group, the United Utilities (from the UK). BPI Capital (which is also controlled by the Ayala group), the International Finance Corp. or IFC (the investment arm of the World Bank), Mitsubishi Corp. (a long-time partner of Ayala group in everything), and the employees of Manila Water.

Many of those employees came from the MWSS, the government-owned water company. Under its contract, Manila Water had to absorb them after the privatization.

To be sure, the IPO will be good for the employees.

From what I heard, some of them already sold their shares at bargain prices. Perhaps they thought of the shares, at that time, as worthless.

* * *

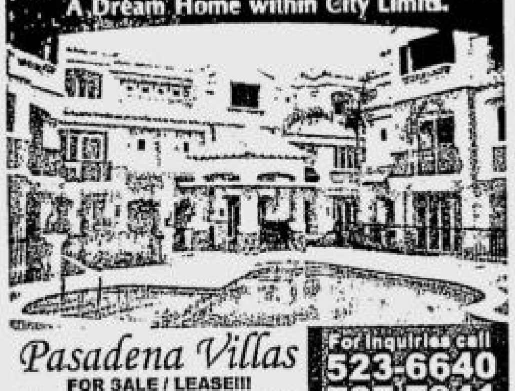
ACCORDING to the Manila Water officials, the Ayala group stands to earn some P500 million from the IPO.

The amount, one of them quickly adds, is nothing to the Ayala group, as if to say it is not about the money.

To us down here, P500 million is still a lot of money. And also for a company like Manila Water!

In this forthcoming IPO, the challenge to Manila Water is, I think, how to explain to the public, and explain it well, how come the stockholders are already cashing in their chips.

There are other issues in this water concession IPO. But we shall go into them later.



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January inflation . . .

From page B1

ordination Committee (DBCC), the interagency committee that sets the government's economic policies and targets, has set the inflation target for this year at 5 to 6 percent.

The government is expecting the increase in prices to soften this year as the factors that contributed to the sharp rise in prices last year are no longer expected this time. The Neda earlier said oil prices are no longer seen to hit levels registered last year, and effects of the El Niño weather phenomenon on the agriculture sector is expected to be only moderate.

Neri said the DBCC has decided to use the 2000 price basket as a determinant of inflation to better reflect the consumers' purchasing behavior and to incorporate additional inflation risk that has emerged since the target was originally set in 2004.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Revised Circular No. 472
Series of 2005

Pursuant to Monetary Board Resolution No. 74 dated 20 January 2005, the following regulations governing banks and all financial institutions under the regulation and supervision of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) are hereby issued, as follows:

Section 1. Subsection X304.1 of the Manual of Regulations For Banks (MORB) is hereby amended to read as follows:

"***General Guidelines.*** Consistent with safe and sound banking practices, a bank shall grant loans or other credit accommodations only in amounts and for the periods of time essential for the effective completion of the operation to be financed.

Before granting loans or other credit accommodations, a bank must ascertain that the borrower, co-maker, endorser, surety and/or guarantor, if applicable, is financially capable of fulfilling his/their commitments to the bank. For this purpose, a bank shall obtain adequate information on his/their credit standing and financial capacities.

In addition to the usual information sheet about the borrower, a bank shall require from the credit applicant a statement of his assets and liabilities and of his income and expenses together with the following:

1. A copy of the latest Income Tax Return (ITR) of the borrower and his co-maker, if applicable, duly stamped as received by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR); and
2. Except as otherwise provided by law and in other regulations, if the borrower is engaged in business, a copy of the borrower's latest financial statements as submitted for taxation purposes to the BIR.
3. A waiver of confidentiality of client information and/or an authority of the bank to conduct random verification with the BIR in order to establish authenticity of the ITR and accompanying financial statements submitted by the client.

The consistency of the data/figures in said ITR and statements shall also be checked and considered in the evaluation of the financial capacity and creditworthiness of credit applicants.

Should the document(s) submitted prove to be spurious or incorrect in any material detail, the bank may terminate any loan or other credit accommodation granted on the basis of said document(s) and shall have the right to demand immediate repayment or liquidation of the obligation. Moreover, the bank may seek redress from the court for any harm done by the borrower's submission of spurious documents."

Section 2. Subsection X304.4 is hereby added to the MORB the provisions of which shall read as follows:

"***Signatories.*** A bank shall require that loans and other credit accommodations be made under the signature of the principal borrower and in the case of unsecured loans and other credit accommodations to an individual borrower, at least one co-maker, except when the principal borrower has the financial capacity and a good track record of paying his obligations."

Section 3: Coverage. The provisions of Sections 1 and 2 of this Circular shall cover loans, other credit accommodations, and credit lines granted, renewed or extended after the effectivity of this Circular, including any availment and/or re-availment against existing credit line, except, consumer loans, as defined herein, which are supported by the documents enumerated in Section 1 of this Circular at the time they were granted.

Section 4. Item I.B.1.d of the Guidelines in Identifying and Monitoring Problem Loans and Other Risk Assets and Setting-up of Allowance for Probable Losses under Appendix 18 of the MORB is hereby amended to delete the exemption of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) loans with no latest ITR and/or AFS from "Loans Especially Mentioned" classification and shall read as follows:

"d. Loans with no latest Income Tax Return (ITR) and/or latest Audited Financial Statements (AFS), except consumer loans with original amount not exceeding P2 million which are current, have not been restructured and are supported by latest ITR and/or AFS at the time they were granted and loans not required to be supported by ITR and AFS pursuant to existing law and regulations such as loans granted to duly registered Barangay Micro Business Enterprises and other microfinance loans.

For this purpose, consumer loans is defined to include housing loans, loans for purchase of car, household appliance(s), furniture and fixtures, loans for payment of educational and hospital bills, salary loans and loans for personal consumption.

Section 5. Subsection X304.5 is hereby added to the MORB the provisions of which shall read as follows:

"***Sanctions.*** Any violation of the provisions of this Section shall be subject to the sanctions provided under Sections 36 and 37 of R.A. no. 7653 (The New Central Bank Act)."

Section 6. The provisions of this Circular shall also be applicable to all non-bank financial institutions under the regulation and supervision of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

This Circular shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

For the Monetary Board:

(Sgd.) **RAFAEL B. BUENAVENTURA**
Governor

February 1, 2005

AIR PHILIPPINES will soon fly to China and Japan.

JOSEPH BERNABE

Air Phils. starts next phase of refleeting

By Clarissa S. Batino

AIR PHILIPPINES Corp., the low-cost carrier of taipan Lucio Tan, plans to acquire four more Boeing 737-200s starting this year as part of its expansion program.

"We are now on the second phase of the refleeting program with a firm order of two more aircraft of the same type. There is a plan to acquire two more," said an airline official.

The country's third largest airline is expanding its fleet after it was given a five-year permit by the Civil Aeronautics Board to operate scheduled and chartered domestic and overseas flights.

The CAB allowed Air Philippines last October to mount flights to the United States, Singapore, China and Japan.

Air Philippines, however, said it would prefer to go to South Korea and Malaysia, rather then fly to the US and Singapore.

These routes will complement Air Philippines' flights to Hong Kong and Thailand.

Air Philippines completed the first phase of its expansion with the arrival last month of its sixth plane—a 118-seater Boeing 737-200.

The sister company of Philippine Airlines registered profits in 2004, the first time it earned money since it started operations eight years ago.

In 2003, the company booked more than P100 million in losses.

Air Philippine's gains followed the airline's improved efficiency as a result of the fleet upgrading that started in 2003.

The airline firm posted a net profit of P186 million in the first nine months of 2004.

Its top official said that travel picked up in 2004 after a string of concerns, like the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in 2001, the US-Iraq war and the deadly Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome that dogged the airline industry, eventually eased.

"We have cleaned the company's balance sheet and after that we started refleeting with more efficient and newer airplanes. The upgrading helped improve our operations," said Air Philippines president Edilberto Medina in an earlier interview.

The company is preparing itself to seriously challenge the dominance of Gokongwei firm Cebu Air Pacific in the low-cost market.

Embarking on a reimaging program, Air Philippines said it wants to be the preferred low-cost carrier in the market.

Air Philippines is 99 percent owned by the Lucio Tan Group.

Plastics king William Gatchalian used to own Air Philippines, but he sold 70 percent of the company to Tan.

VICTORIAS
MILLING COMPANY, INC.

NOTICE

OF POSTPONEMENT OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

To All Stockholders:

Notice is hereby given that the **Annual Stockholders' Meeting** of **Victorias Milling Company, Inc.** previously scheduled on **1 March 2005**, has been postponed by the Board of Directors to **1 April 2005 at 9:00 in the morning.**

Formal notice and agenda for the meeting shall be published later.

(Sgd.) SANTIAGO T. GABIONZA, JR.
Corporate Secretary

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of February 4, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	4.1	4.1	4	4	41,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	30.5	31.5	30	31.5	542,900
Bank of the Phil. Islands	57	57	56	56	1,135,600
Citystate Savings Bank	17.5	17.5	17.5	17.5	1,100
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	46	46.5	45	45	53,000
Export and Ind. Bank Inc	0.45	0.45	0.44	0.44	350,000
International Exch. Bank	18.25	18.5	18.25	18.25	54,500
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	32	32.5	31.5	32	1,116,400
Philippine National Bank	27	27	26.5	26.5	62,300
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	14.5	15	14.5	15	4,000
Security Bank Corp.	30.5	31	30	30	31,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	29.5	29.5	29	29	6,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	100,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	2400	2420	2400	2420	70
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	2	2	2	2	1,651,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	120	120	120	120	240
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1765	1765	1765	1765	330
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp	17.25	17.25	17	17	30,100
Digital Telecom Phils Inc	1.64	1.64	1.5	1.52	37,539,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	945	950	930	945	90,600
Ipeople Inc	4.4	4.4	4.2	4.2	333,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.05	0.05	0.049	0.049	1,700,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.037	0.037	0.037	0.037	8,000,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	60,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.95	3.95	3.8	3.85	5,794,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1390	1405	1390	1405	268,350
Ivantage Corp.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	70,000
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	28,300,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	17.25	17.75	17	17	13,800
Manila Electric Co. B	26.5	26.5	25.5	26	675,100
Petron Corporation	3.85	3.9	3.85	3.9	2,552,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	1,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.7	1.7	1.58	1.58	940,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.82	1.82	1.74	1.82	701,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	7.4	7.6	7.4	7.5	1,209,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc	0.43	0.43	0.42	0.42	130,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.1	1.12	1.1	1.12	270,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.4	0.4	2,400,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	0.95	0.95	0.89	0.89	110,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.5	4.6	4.4	4.55	21,828,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.5	1.68	1.4	1.4	250,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	137,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.4	93,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	31.5	31.5	31.5	31.5	1,337,100
Jollibee Foods Corp.	26	26	25.5	25.5	619,200
Pancake House Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.1	14,000
RFM Corp.	0.78	0.9	0.78	0.84	1,960,000
Swift Food, Inc.	0.33	0.36	0.33	0.35	420,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57.5	57.5	57.5	57.5	55,300
San Miguel Corp. B	76.5	76.5	76	76.5	62,500
Vitarich Corp.	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.27	700,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.008	0.008	0.0075	0.008	39,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	5,000,000
Ayala Corp.	7.7	7.8	7.7	7.8	6,217,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.98	1	0.78	0.8	13,300,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.8	3.9	3.8	3.9	308,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.03	0.03	0.029	0.029	3,300,000
A. Soriano Corporation	1.92	1.92	1.9	1.92	373,000
APC Group Inc.	0.43	0.44	0.36	0.39	14,960,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.009	0.009	0.008	0.008	176,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.37	0.37	120,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	10,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.87	0.87	0.83	0.83	190,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	20	20	20	20	4,100
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	600,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.08	1.08	1	1.02	29,010,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.225	0.225	0.21	0.21	3,240,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	1,740,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.42	0.52	0.42	0.47	81,760,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	5.8	6.1	5.2	5.4	21,908,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.036	0.037	0.036	0.037	4,300,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.16	1.18	1.16	1.18	418,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp	9	9	9	9	1,893,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp	44.5	45.5	44	44.5	3,181,200
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.165	0.165	170,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.0875	0.0875	0.08	0.08	15,700,000
House of Investments Inc.	1.28	1.28	1.14	1.16	2,091,000
Ionics Inc.	1.86	2.02	1.86	1.86	3,777,000
J.G. Summit Holdings, Inc	3.15	3.2	3	3	931,000
Keppel Holdings	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	1,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.36	2.36	2.36	2.36	270,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	2,000,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	1,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.48	1.48	4,302,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	30,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	600,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.51	0.51	0.48	0.49	46,700,000
Polar Property Holdings	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	10,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	470,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc	1.26	1.26	1.2	1.2	60,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.9	0.9	0.88	0.88	370,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	390,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.41	0.42	0.41	0.42	300,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.135	0.135	1,000,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.185	0.185	0.16	0.185	1,930,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.24	0.25	0.225	0.225	1,400,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Active Alliance Inc.	1.2	1.2	1	1	21,000
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	10,000
Music Semiconductors Corp	1.88	1.98	1.8	1.8	493,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.92	10,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	300,000
Philippine Seven Corp.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	1,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	100,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.67	0.67	0.65	0.66	4,930,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	1.08	1.1	1.04	1.04	1,208,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.58	0.59	0.57	0.57	460,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.35	0.36	0.35	0.35	3,450,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp (Pdr)	17.25	17.25	17	17	325,300
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	9.3	9.3	9.1	9.1	44,094,000
Cityland Development Corp	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	500,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	70,000
C&P Homes Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.32	0.32	7,290,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.18	0.185	0.16	0.16	4,180,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.43	0.44	9,970,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.54	1.54	1.48	1.5	5,206,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	90,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	850,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.19	0.2	0.19	0.2	50,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.1	0.12	0.1	0.1	2,030,000
Primex Corp.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	120,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	1,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.21	0.22	0.21	0.21	1,840,000
SM Development Corp.	1.68	1.68	1.52	1.58	911,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8.4	8.5	8.4	8.5	1,488,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.95	0.95	0.79	0.79	720,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc B	0.9	0.9	0.85	0.85	210,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.015	0.015	0.014	0.014	139,100,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	8	8	7.2	7.4	972,000
Benguet Corp. A	9.8	9.8	9.4	9.4	173,000
Benguet Corp. B	12	12	12	12	2,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	4.5	4.5	4	4.4	169,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.43	0.43	0.39	0.4	21,460,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.49	0.49	0.45	0.45	25,560,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.024	0.025	0.022	0.023	368,100,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.036	0.036	0.033	0.033	551,300,000
Omico Corp.	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	379,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.22	1.22	1.1	1.14	6,744,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.56	1.6	1.46	1.48	14,101,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	46	52	46	48.5	18,793,800
United Paragon Mining Co,	0.39	0.39	0.35	0.37	1,510,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	45,600,000
Interport Res.	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	27,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	13,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	75,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	84,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.36	0.36	0.3	0.31	2,640,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.42	0.42	0.4	0.4	500,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.65	2.65	2.6	2.6	36,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.09	0.105	0.09	0.1	15,550,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.38	0.38	0.36	0.36	2,630,000

Ginebra net ₱1.68B in '04

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

GINEBRA San Miguel Inc., the hard liquor arm of Southeast Asia's largest food and beverage firm San Miguel Corp., reported modest net profits last year at P1.68 billion, up 2 percent from the previous year on higher liquor volumes and operating income.

Operating income rose 13 percent to P915 million in the fourth quarter, with the company's increased selling and marketing efforts.

"A greater share of the market was gained (in the second half of 2004) through product portfolio expansion, product and packaging improvements, aggressive selling and intensified advertisement and promotions," Eduardo M. Cojuangco Jr., GSMI chair, said in a report to the board.

GSMI's unaudited full-year operating income stood at P2.96 billion, up 9 percent over the previous year's P2.71 billion, notwithstanding increases in the costs of direct materials, packaging and distribution.

Total volume for 2004 grew 8 percent.

GSMI is confident it will sustain the upward trend in its market share and end 2005 with an even bigger market share.

GSMI is positioning itself as a diversified alcoholic beverage company. It will continue developing new alcoholic beverages, the quality and look of which will be at par with international standards.

The company is also enhancing its production capacities to attain more flexibility in manufacturing existing and developmental products and packaging formats.

GSMI earlier announced that it was investing in a joint venture with the Thai Life Group to build a distillery and bottling plant in Thailand. GSMI acquired a 40-percent stake in CNT Wine and Liquor Co. Ltd., a subsidiary of Thai Life. CNT owns a license to build and operate a distillery in Thailand.

San Miguel earlier said it would also build a P1.8-billion alcohol distillery in Mindanao and expand its existing distillery in Negros Occidental to meet growing demand for GSMI products here and abroad.

These initiatives are part of San Miguel's massive expansion and modernization plan.

Regulator won't object to CAP's borrowing plan

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission (SEC) said it would not object to the proposal of the College Assurance Plan Philippines Inc. (CAP) to borrow $300 million from a California-based lender.

But SEC chair Fe Barin was quick to add that the regulator would step in if CAP would make any move to increase its capital or secure funding to settle maturing plans by tampering with its trust fund.

"Whether or not they will borrow is a decision of CAP," Barin said. "Even from where they will borrow ... (that) is their decision. We will only come in if it will involve the trust fund."

Barin said that in the case of the proposed loan to be secured from California-based First American Investments Llc., the SEC would be forced to act if the trust fund were to be used as security for the loan. The regulator would see to it that the trust fund would not be compromised in case CAP would default on its loan.

The SEC earlier said it was not coddling CAP just because it had not imposed a deadline on the filing of requirements nor ordered the shutdown of the troubled pre-need firm.

Barin explained that it was up to CAP to comply with the requirements of increasing its capital and making sure it could adequately address its cash flow problem.

CAP at present is trying to resolve its cash flow problems by trying to secure a $300-million loan from First American Investments.

It also plans to improve its capital adequacy requirement by proposing to swap shares for a 2,900-hectare property owned by Green Circle and Green Square property firms.

A unit at the SEC said the value of the property should be based on its fair value as reflected by market prices. CAP cited an appraisal by the Cuervo group which pegged the value of the prices of property at P6 billion.

CAP earlier submitted to the SEC its application to swap shares for property assets of Green Square Properties and Green Circle Properties and Resources.

But the regulator still has yet to approve CAP's application. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

China company eyes revival of nickel refinery in Nonoc

PHILNICO Mining and Industrial Corp. on Friday said it was in advanced talks with China's Jinchuan Nonferrous Metals Corp. to revive the Nonoc nickel refinery in the southern Philippines for about $1 billion.

The plant, located on the island of Nonoc in Surigao del Norte, was established in 1975 but ceased operations in 1986 due to technical problems and high cost of fuel.

"We are in advance negotiations with Jinchuan," Evaristo Narvaez Jr., chairman of Philnico, said on the sidelines of an international mining conference in Manila. "They have already conducted due diligence work."

"We are talking to other parties aside from Jinchuan to complete the financing requirement," he added.

In November, Trade Secretary Cesar Purisima said Jinchuan, China's top nickel producer, and Baosteel, China's top steel maker, were conducting due diligence for the revival of the Nonoc plant.

Chinese companies have been stepping up their investments in foreign mining projects to secure resources needed to fuel the country's booming economy.

"What we want is to get a core investor who is in mining because, from there, we can build on it and get other financial investors," Narvaez said.

The Nonoc plant, which used to be the country's sole nickel processing plant, produced up to 25,000 tons of nickel a year, according to the Mines and Geosciences Bureau.

Narvaez said his company plans to rehabilitate the old Nonoc mining and construct a new pressure-acid leach nickel plant. The firm will discard its old ammonia leach plant, he said.

According to Narvaez, by adopting a new technology in extracting nickel, Philnico would be able to save on cost and increase its recovery of the metal used in the manufacture of stainless steel.

Philnico is majority owned by Australia's Pacific Energy Ltd. and Britain's Compline Resources.

The revival of the Nonoc nickel refinery would make it the second nickel processing plant in the Philippines. *Reuters*

Semirara move seen to spur other firms to go public

By Abigail L. Ho

THE LISTING of 46.9 million additional shares by local large-scale coal producer Semirara Mining Corp. is seen to spur other energy-related firms to list with the local bourse.

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez said Semirara's offering would encourage firms engaged in oil exploration, geothermal energy and power to do their own initial public offerings.

The Philippine Stock Exchange has been trying to coax oil major Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. and power firms Mirant Philippines Corp. and First Generation Holdings Corp. to go public.

Last month, First Gen president Federico Lopez said the company was in talks with prospective financial advisors to facilitate its IPO set to be conducted in the middle or in the second half of the year.

He said First Gen hoped to raise some $200 million to $250 million from the IPO, which would represent between 20 and 25 percent of the company's shares.

The Semirara offering is the first international equity offering from the energy sector this year.

Semirara listed 46.875 million worth of shares at the stock market. Its shares yesterday closed at P48.50.

As the country's only large-scale coal producer, the Semirara mine in Antique produces coal that is used by the National Power Corp. as well as by other local power firms and cement factories.

Semirara is now trying to raise its production capacity to 3.5 million metric tons this year from its current capacity of 2.6 million tons.

Yesterday, Semirara officials said that the mining firm would declare a 20-percent cash payout to shareholders next year as soon as the firm hits its projected 2005 net profit of P2.5 billion.

Herbert Consunji, Semirara treasurer and director, said the company would declare a cash dividend worth roughly P500 million against its expected earnings this year.

Last year, Semirara booked P1.2 to P1.3 billion in net earnings as average prices of coal in the world market improved to $2,200 a metric ton last year from $1,300 in 2003. So far this year, the average price of coal was at $2,800 a metric ton. *With a report from Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

DISCLOSURES

THE **COSMOS Bottling Corp. (CBC)** board of directors approved the amendments of CBC's by-laws and scheduled the regular stockholders' meeting on May 12 at 2 p.m. Only stockholders with record date April 1, 2005 are entitled to vote.

* * *

THE **GINEBRA San Miguel Inc. (GSMI)** board of directors approved the amendments of the GSMI's by-laws and scheduled the regular stockholders' meeting on May 19 at 2 p.m. Only stockholders with record date April 1, 2005 are entitled to vote.

* * *

A BROWN Co. announced buying, 140,000 shares of BRN at P0.65 per share last Feb 2, 2005.

* * *

THE **PHILIPPINE Townships Inc.**, a wholly owned subsidiaries of RFM Corp., elected Eleuterio D. Coronel as the new president and COO of the company.

* * *

GINEBRA San Miguel Inc. declared a cash dividend of P0.375 per share payable on March 11, 2005 to all stockholders of record as of Feb. 18, 2005. The stock and transfer books will be closed from Feb. 19-25, 2005.

* * *

AYALA Land Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 6, 9 a.m. at the Grand Ballroom, Hotel Inter Continental Manila, Ayala Center, Makati City. Only stockholders of record as of Feb. 18, are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

THE **PHARMA Industries** denied having any information to explain the 40-percent decrease in its Interphil Laboratories Inc. Class A, share price that shrank from P1.90 to P1.14 each. ***Compiled by Chona Galang, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

February 4, 2005 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.770654	1.000000	54.9140
Japan	Yen	0.007377	0.009572	0.5256
United Kingdom	Pound	1.450755	1.882500	103.3756
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.098804	0.128208	7.0404
Switzerland	Franc	0.641356	0.832224	45.7007
Canada	Dollar	0.620994	0.805802	44.2498
Singapore	Dollar	0.470628	0.610687	33.5353
Australia	Dollar	0.593312	0.769882	42.2773
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.044283	2.652661	145.6682
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.205502	0.266660	14.6434
Brunei	Dollar	0.469195	0.608828	33.4332
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000084	0.000109	0.0060
Thailand	Baht	0.020017	0.025974	1.4263
UAE	Dirham	0.209850	0.272301	14.9531
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.297600	71.2564
Argentina	Peso	0.264239	0.342877	18.8287
Brazil	Real	0.295779	0.383803	21.0762
Denmark	Kroner	0.134340	0.174319	9.5726
India	Rupee	0.017798	0.023095	1.2682
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.202831	0.263193	14.4530
Mexico	New Peso	0.069068	0.089622	4.9215
New Zealand	Dollar	0.546796	0.709522	38.9627
Norway	Kroner	0.120631	0.156531	8.5957
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012989	0.016855	0.9256
South Africa	Rand	0.125975	0.163465	8.9765
Korea	Won	0.000752	0.000976	0.0536
Sweden	Kroner	0.110106	0.142873	7.8457
Syria	Pound	0.014846	0.019264	1.0579
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024346	0.031591	1.7348
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000402	0.000522	0.0287

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SCIENCE/HEALTH

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BREAST AUGMENTATION

Cheap implants could be fatal

By Charles E. Buban

DESIRING to have full-figured breasts should not cost any woman her health. Rose, 26, believed this when she decided to go under the knife more than a year ago to transform her size 34A bosom to a 34C.

Today, the result of that P30,000 surgical procedure is no longer evident and Rose is worried because she has to contend not only with sagging breasts, but also with painful lumps that have developed.

"I know breast implants are not guaranteed to last a lifetime, but I didn't expect them to deflate in such a short span of time and cause me so much distress," laments Rose, whose husband, a British expatriate, advised her to see another surgeon.

Many cases

This is not the first time a situation like Rose's has come to the attention of Dr. Ferdinand Samonte, a cosmetic surgeon at the De Los Santos Medical Center in Quezon City.

"I have met a number of women who share Rose's plight and our team has to perform the necessary surgeries to correct the problem," Samonte says.

He says that most of their patients' problems are due to breast implants that are not approved by regulatory bodies like the US Food and Drug Administration, or whose safety is not proven.

"They think they get a bargain; spending P30,000 or even P60,000 is certainly more attractive than paying P120,000 to P140,000, which is the cost if one has to have silicone gel- or saline-filled breast implants," says Samonte.

FALPAC HOSPITAL

Soya oil implants

Samonte says they have extracted oil in some of their patients' breasts. This type of breast implant could cause reactions in the body, and could be fatal.

One study reveals that soya bean oil breast implants, promoted as a natural alternative to silicone, may potentially degrade into toxic aldehydes that can cause cancer and birth defects, Samonte says.

"The result was dreadful," says Dr. Anthony John Samonte, Ferdinand's younger brother and fellow cosmetic surgeon.

He said they had to do several operations to rectify the damage.

Safety vs price

The younger Samonte advises patients to be very careful when choosing their plastic surgeon.

"Safety should never be compromised by price. If [the offer] is too good to be true, it probably is. Shop around and if your plastic surgeon's price is dramatically lower than the prevailing market price, be very skeptical," says Samonte.

Breast augmentation is a relatively straightforward procedure. But as with any surgery, it is important that patients understand all potential risks involved.

Dr Jose Rico Antonio, an associate of the Samonte brothers, says the most common risks for breast augmentation surgery are "local" complications. These include implant deflation, capsular contracture, calcium deposits, infection, delayed wound healing, growth of neuromas, hematomas, changes in breast or nipple sensation, implant shifts, bleeding, breast asymmetry or excessive scarring.

Antonio says: "Patients should never be afraid to ask their doctor any question that pertains to the surgery regardless of how silly the question may seem."

Educating women

The three surgeons, who hold a clinic at the Healthway Medical Clinic in Shangri-La Plaza, Mandaluyong City, recently formed a movement called Cosmetic Surgery Associates, whose aim is to educate and assist women who want personal improvement through plastic surgery.

"Many people view plastic surgery, like breast enhancement, as an act of pure vanity or something they should be ashamed to admit that they want. I believe that wanting to alter the features one was born with is nothing to be ashamed of," says Antonio.

And if you decide to proceed, make sure you are kept informed every step of the way.

Words, emotions and the world

DISCOVER

Massie Santos Ballon

ONCE upon a time—and I write this because I think this story's a fairytale, and all fairytales start with that line—there were two sisters who lived with their mother. One was friendly to all and always helped her mother do the household chores. The other was lazy and cared only about herself.

One day, both sisters fell under the spell of a witch. From that moment on, when the helpful sister spoke, precious jewels dropped from her lips. I think she married a prince who didn't want her to fill an empty treasure room, but I like to think she lived happily ever after. When the lazy sister spoke, toads fell out of her mouth and eventually she went away and was never seen again.

The moral of the story and the emotions the reader feels are connected to the characters themselves: being good and kind and helpful yields rewards like valuable jewels—although occasional pearls of wisdom might hurt less—and love. On the other hand, naughty children should behave if they don't want to experience the shame and embarrassment of having slime drip from their mouths.

Common emotion words

Researchers have long studied the relationship between words and emotion. According to Robert Schrauf, associate professor of applied linguistics at the Pennsylvania State University, the way people use words says volumes about how they process emotions.

"It has been suggested in the past that all cultures have in common a small number of emotions or emotion words [like happy or sad]," he said in a press release, "but…every culture has multiple ways of nuancing them, sometimes quite differently."

Working with Julia Sanchez, a graduate student at the Chicago School for Psychology, Schrauf looked at the words different cultures use for various emotions to learn how people process what they feel. Their paper appeared in last June's issue of the journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development.

Schrauf et al. asked each participant to write down as many emotions as they could think of within two minutes. That done, the researchers asked them to go through their lists and write down any other emotions they could remember. Finally, the participants were asked to mark whether the emotion listed was pleasant, unpleasant or neutral.

Age and culture

To compare results across age and culture, four groups of 30 people participated in the study. Half of the participants were in their 20s and spoke only Spanish or only English. The other half were in their 60s and had the same linguistic background as the younger volunteers. All participants had similar educational backgrounds, each one having spent approximately 15 years in school.

Schrauf et al. theorized that the older participants would have more words on their lists because as a person goes from childhood to maturity, his emotional vocabulary expands over time because of his experiences.

They also expected to find more negative emotions on everyone's list because, they said, people tended to dwell on negative experiences and think about what happened. Positive events, the researchers noted, made people feel secure and comfortable so they don't think about them as much.

"The more individuals think about something, the more distinctions they will make, and the more words they will use to hold those distinctions in mind," Schrauf et al. said.

More negative emotions

Comparing the answers of the participants, Schrauf et al. found that 50 percent of all the words on the lists were for negative emotions, 30 percent were for positive emotions, and 20 percent were for neutral emotions.

They also found that the emotions listed fell under several emotion labels, and that the number of labels varied between groups. The 20-somethings in Chicago had about 52 emotion labels on their lists, while the older group came up with 81. The younger participants in Mexico City came up with 63 emotion labels, while the older members had 79.

Based on these results, Schrauf et al. concluded that people process emotions the same way cross-culturally and cross-generationally, and that people process negative emotions in more detail than they do positive emotions.

Although they noted that their study only involved monolinguists, they predicted that studies involving participants who speak more than one language and have multicultural backgrounds would have similar results. Time will only tell if they are proven right.

E-mail the author at massie@massie.com.

Passive smoke raises kids' lung cancer risk, says study

LONDON—Children exposed to passive smoking have a higher risk of developing lung cancer later in life than other youngsters, according to new research.

Daily exposure for many hours could treble the risk but even if children encountered secondhand smoke only on a weekly basis it could be dangerous.

"Passive smoking clearly increases the risk of lung cancer," Prof. Paolo Vineis, of Imperial College London, told Reuters. "People should not smoke in the presence of their children."

Vineis and his team followed up more than 123,000 people who never smoked but who had been exposed to secondhand smoke as children, to see how many developed lung cancer.

They compared the occurrence of the disease in them with that in children who had not been exposed to smoke.

50% increased risk

In research reported in the British Medical Journal, they said 97 of the passive smoking youngsters suffered from lung cancer, 20 others had upper respiratory cancers and 14 more died from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which is also caused by smoking.

"You have approximately an increase of 50 percent risk if you are exposed to passive smoking," said Vineis. "It is much less serious than active smoking but, nevertheless, it needs to be taken seriously."

Lung cancer is the leading cause of death from cancer worldwide, according to the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) in Lyon, France, which is an extension of the World Health Organization.

Each year 900,000 new cases are diagnosed in men worldwide and 330,000 in women. Smoking is the main cause of the disease.

In addition to increasing the risk of cancer, researchers have shown that chemical and gases in tobacco contribute to cancer of the stomach, liver, kidney and cervix. *Reuters*

X'mas puzzle winners, solutions

(Conclusion)

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua

HERE are the other questions in the Christmas puzzle and their solutions:

2. You have a bow and some arrows. If you shoot the first arrow at exactly noon and shoot one arrow every minute after that until 1 o'clock, how many arrows will you have shot?

Ryan Liwanag states: 61 arrows. One arrow is shot at 12:01, another at 12:02, and so on. Until 1:00, those are 60 arrows (60 minutes in 1 hour). However you shoot at exactly 12:00. This accounts for the additional arrow.

3. Here is a well-known quotation. Can you figure out what it says? BRD N TH HND S WRTH TW N TH BSH

Ivan Quentin says: We first note that the given text of the quote consists of all consonants, which suggests that vowels need to be added to complete it. If we try to pronounce the given text without the vowels, the words "bird in the hand is worth two in the bush" just leap out! It is then only necessary to add the missing word "A" at the beginning to get the well-known quotation: "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."

Word in arrow

4. The arrows below represent a common word. Can you figure out what the word is?

↑ → ← ↓

Art Valencia has a creative solution: The word is NEWS, formed by the initials of north, east, west and south, which are respectively the directions shown by the arrows.

Interestingly, the puzzle can have many answers if you consider that the arrows have the following possible interpretations: First arrow: north, above, up, over, win, victory, growth, increase; Second arrow: east, right, side, draw; Third arrow: west, left, side, draw; Fourth arrow: south, below, down, under, loss, defeat, decrease.

Possible answers from the initials of these words, in right-to-left reading order, are NEWS, ADDS, URDU, WELL, WELD, ODDS and, if we are a bit flexible, WORLD (win over, right, left, defeat or down) and WORDS (win over, right, draw, south) or GUESS (growth up, etc.).

And reading from right to left (the way some cultures do), we have SLEW and BLEW.

Imagine how many more answers you'll get if you have more interpretations (e.g. "aside" for the second and third arrows, giving the much needed A to the combinations) and forming the initial in any order. (SLUR, DRAB, etc.).

Three suitors

5. There are three smart guys courting Annie. Annie decides to test them. She places a mark on each man's forehead and tells them that each of them has either a white mark or a red mark. She tells them to raise their hand if they see a white mark on either of the other two. The first man to deduce what color his mark is, and explains how he arrived at his answer will be the one to marry her. Each man raises his hand, and after some time, one of them has the answer. What color is the winner's mark? How does he reason out?

Martin Valdes says: Let's call the men Adam, Bob and Carl. If each man raised his hand, then that means each man saw at least one white mark on another man's head, possibly two.

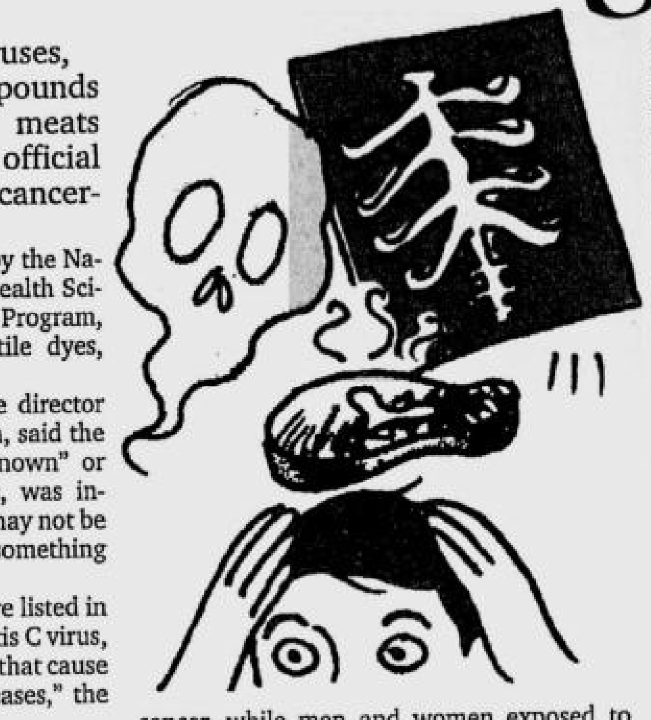
The key here is the passage of time ("after some time"). I like the name Bob so let's run with him. If Bob sees two red marks on both Adam and Carl, he'll know his is white because they are obviously noting his head. If Bob sees one red and one white, and yet both Adam and Carl have raised their hands (meaning one of them still sees at least one white), then he knows his mark must be white.

If Bob sees two whites, yet neither Adam nor Carl (who are both smart) have called in their shot using the prior logic, then it is because they both see two whites as well, meaning his mark is white. So Bob wins with white.

Good work everyone, and wait for the next puzzle contest! To subscribe to daily puzzles, text PUZZLE to Globe at 2356 or to Smart at 206.

E-mail the author at blessbook@yahoo.com.

Viruses, X-rays join list of 246 cancer agents



WASHINGTON—Viruses, X-rays and compounds found in grilled meats joined the US government's official list of known or suspected cancer-causing agents.

The list, issued every two years by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and the National Toxicology Program, also adds chemicals used in textile dyes, paints and inks.

Dr. Christopher Portier, associate director of the National Toxicology Program, said the list, which now identifies 246 "known" or "suspected" cancer-causing agents, was intended to give people who may or may not be exposed to any of the substances something to think about.

"For the first time ever, viruses are listed in the report: hepatitis B virus, hepatitis C virus, and some human papillomaviruses that cause common sexually transmitted diseases," the NIEHS said.

They include the hepatitis B and hepatitis C viruses, which can cause liver cancer, and human papillomaviruses, also known as human wart viruses, which are sexually transmitted and can cause cervical cancer.

X-rays

"X-radiation and gamma-radiation are listed in the report as 'known human carcinogens' because human studies show that exposure to these kinds of radiation causes many types of cancer including leukemia and cancers of the thyroid, breast and lung," the NIEHS said.

Children exposed to high levels of X-rays have a higher risk of leukemia and thyroid cancer, while men and women exposed to chest area X-rays at certain times can have higher risks of breast and lung cancer.

"Exposure to X-radiation and gamma radiation has also been shown to cause cancer of the salivary glands, stomach, colon, bladder, ovaries, central nervous system and skin," the NIEHS said.

Sources include medical scans, scientific research, military testing and nuclear accidents.

But the American College of Radiology faulted the addition of X-rays and gamma rays, saying it was misleading and could prompt patients to avoid getting needed care.

"X-rays and gamma rays are not substances that the general public has access or exposure to and do not belong on a list of substances that pose a risk to people in the course of their normal, daily lives," Dr. James Borgstede, chair of the radiology college's board of chancellors, said in a statement.

Grilled meat

New to the "suspected" category are substances—heterocyclic amine compounds—that form when meats are cooked or grilled at high temperatures. Studies suggest an increased cancer risk when foods containing them are eaten.

"Does that mean you have to throw out your barbecue grill?" asked Dr. Elizabeth Whelan of the consumer education group American Council on Science and Health and a critic of the list.

She said the "not consumer friendly" list should include information on the types of exposures and dosages that cause cancer, as well as on the health benefits of some of the substances identified, such as tamoxifen, the breast cancer treatment pill.

Chemicals

Lead, used to make lead-acid storage batteries, ammunition and cable coverings, and lead compounds, used in paint, glass and ceramics, in some cosmetics and as a fuel additive joined the "suspect" list.

Naphthalene, an ingredient in mothballs and toilet bowl deodorants, was also added to the suspected carcinogen list.

The Report on Carcinogens—which federal law requires the health and human services secretary to update every two years—lists 58 "known" and 188 "reasonably anticipated" cancer-causing substances. It was last updated in December 2002. *Reuters, AP*

HELLO MISS ...
Pwe!
Steph.

Study: Smoking harms women more than men

AMSTERDAM—Cigarette smoking is more harmful to women than to men, cutting more than a decade off female smokers' life expectancy but much less for their male peers, Dutch government research suggested last Monday.

Statistics agency CBS said a comparison of the numbers of Dutch who died of lung cancer in 2003 and smoking trends showed the habit cut a Dutch woman's life expectancy by 11 years, versus three for a man.

"Women who died from lung cancer were younger than men who died from the same cause. This means the harmful effects of smoking are more serious for women than for men," it said, but did not suggest a reason for the difference.

The CBS said a rise in lung cancer among Dutch women since the 1970s correlated with an increase in smoking by women.

On average, female lung cancer sufferers died at age 70 versus an average life expectancy for Dutch women of 81.

Male lung cancer sufferers lived to an age of 73 on average, compared with an average expectancy of 76 years for Dutch men. *Reuters*

ASK THE DENTIST
Paul R. De Castro, DMD

Different fees

I HAVE gone to five different dentists and all of them have different fees for cleaning, fillings, crowns and root canals. Why can't dentists have similar fees?—Mario C.

Each dental office is different and the cost or overhead of each varies. When you undergo a dental treatment, you actually pay for a portion of the rent, the salary of the assistant, the air-con, the expertise of the dentist, the quality of the materials used in the mouth, the sterilization, and so on.

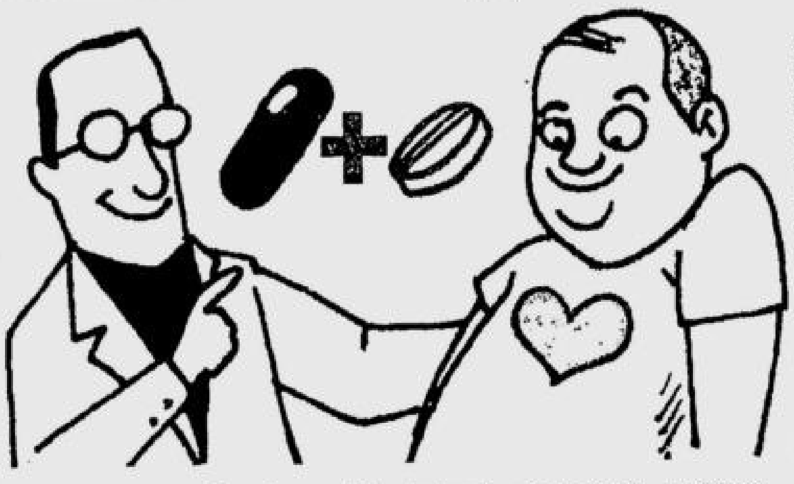
Some patients are never satisfied and find all fees too high. Some are willing to pay the fees as long as they receive the full value of the dental care they believe they should get.

E-mail your questions at dentalqs@yahoo.com.

Combination therapy in cholesterol problems

MEDICAL FILES

By Rafael R. Castillo, MD



MAJOR advances have been achieved in the past decade in the treatment of cholesterol problems, which may come in the form of elevated LDL-cholesterol (bad cholesterol), low levels of HDL-cholesterol (good cholesterol) and increased triglycerides (another form of bad fat).

Still, shortcomings in treatment have been identified which may be responsible for the nonoptimal clinical benefits on patients succumbing to the complications of cholesterol problems, particularly in the presence of other cardiovascular risk factors. Many patients still do not reach their LDL, HDL and triglyceride goals with just one drug (monotherapy).

There are target levels for the three types of cholesterol and all of these have to be achieved for optimal results. Achieving just one cholesterol target is not adequate to reduce the risk of developing heart attacks, strokes and other cardiovascular complications.

Various studies have shown that even in developed countries, only a quarter of patients with cholesterol problems are able to achieve optimal levels. You can surmise how much worse it is in developing countries like ours.

This is partly caused by the apprehensions of many physicians to use high doses of a cholesterol-modulating agent because of the potential for side-effects. This is a big clinical setback since those at highest risk are the ones who do not frequently reach their cholesterol goals.

Treatment option

Because of the clinical dilemma in the management of hard-to-treat cholesterol problems, combination therapy is a valuable treatment option for patients not responding adequately to just one drug. It can help patients effectively reach their LDL-cholesterol goals with no significant increase in drug-related side-effects.

I had the privilege to discuss the various therapeutic options in combination therapy during the recently concluded 10th joint annual convention of the Philippine Society of Hypertension and Philippine Lipid Society.

It is unfortunate that a lot of our physicians rarely use combination therapy because of fear of rare side-effects in the muscles for which some of these drugs have been withdrawn from the market. But fearing a serious side-effect which can possibly occur in three out of 10,000 should not be a deterrent in using a drug regimen that can possibly prevent a potentially fatal heart attack and stroke in at least one out of 10 who take them.

Combinations

In general, combination-therapy should be avoided in patients with renal or liver impairment, increased age, debilitated status, surgery, and trauma. Otherwise, they're safe to use.

Statin, niacin. In the HDL-Atherosclerosis Treatment Study (HATS), combination therapy of niacin and simvastatin showed clinical benefits for 160 patients with coronary artery disease (CAD), low HDL cholesterol, and normal LDL cholesterol. After three years, this combination was associated with a 60- to 90-percent reduction in the incidence of cardiovascular complications.

Statins and fibrates. Although fibrates are the treatment of choice for reducing triglycerides, their LDL-cholesterol lowering effect is not as significant as the statins. Fibrate-statin combinations are now widely used to reduce triglycerides and LDL cholesterol along with increases in HDL cholesterol.

Niacin and bile acid sequestrants. Several trials, such as the Cholesterol Lowering Atherosclerosis Study (CLAS) and the Familial Atherosclerosis Treatment Study (FATS), have shown the efficacy of combining a bile acid sequestrant with niacin. In the CLAS, significantly more patients receiving combination therapy experienced regression or no progression in coronary artery lesions. After a 10-year follow up in the FATS, there were dramatic differences in the death rates between the groups of patients treated with triple therapy (only a 1.3-percent mortality rate) and the group given standard therapy (19.8 percent).

Statins and ezetimibe. Ezetimibe is a selective cholesterol absorption blocker, which blocks intestinal absorption of dietary cholesterol. This combination may be beneficial for patients who need additional LDL cholesterol lowering despite statin monotherapy. Ezetimibe has a low potential for drug interactions and has been shown to be safe in combination with statins.

Surge in sexual wellness in men noted

THERE'S a growing appreciation of the importance of sexual wellness to general health.

Just as the fundamentals of good nutrition, exercise and stress reduction have a therapeutic effect on one's sex life, it also works the other way. A satisfying sex life is an indicator of quality of life. In recent years, this has spawned breakthroughs in the field of enhanced sexual functioning and healthcare.

These days, medical science has made it possible for men to experience an active and satisfying sex life—without worries of threat to health and overall wellbeing. The first line of defense from factors that bear impact on optimum sexual functioning are oral agents. A novel phosphodiesterase-5 (PDE-5) inhibitor that recently made its way into the Philippine marketplace is vardenafil. This potent drug offers what many men are looking for: it is fast-acting and has been shown to improve not only erection hardness but also orgasmic function in men.

Good news

Now here's the good news for the makers and marketers of the breakthrough drug. More guys say vardenafil enables them to enhance their sexual functioning and overall orgasmic experience better than other drugs in its class. This is according to a comparative randomized multicenter study on sexual enhancement presented at the 6th Congress of the European Society for Sexual Medicine.

In a head-to-head study of the three existing PDE5-inhibitor drugs (blocking the enzyme called phosphodiesterase-5, allowing more blood to enter the penis) presented during the Congress, the novel vardenafil toppled its predecessor sildenafil and newcomer tadalafil.

2 separate trials

The study consisted of two separate trials of maximum dose (100 mg sildenafil, 20 mg tadalafil, 20 mg vardenafil in 86 men) and recommended starting dose (50 mg sildenafil, 10 mg tadalafil, 10 mg vardenafil in 47 men). Efficacy was measured using benchmark International Index of Erectile Function (IIEF) and Global Assessment Questionnaire (GAQ) endpoints. Patient satisfaction and preference were also assessed. In terms of overall preference, most men rated vardenafil as the preferred option (47 percent) compared with tadalafil (19 percent) or sildenafil (34 percent) at the recommended starting dose. It will be noted that vardenafil requires less dosage—the recommended starting dose is 10 mg for most men, while maximum daily dose is 20 mg. Vardenafil was also the preferred option at the maximum dose (43 percent compared to 40 percent taldalafil, 17 percent sildenafil).

Said Frank Sommer, MD, lead study investigator and consultant at the Department of Urology, University Medical Centre, Cologne: "These results show that vardenafil is preferred on the key variables necessary for success and satisfaction—ease of getting an erection and hardness of erection. Physicians should consider all the available options to ensure that patients receive the treatment that best meets their needs." In Sommer's study, the men each received the drugs for six weeks within a one-week drug-free period in between. Each drug was taken prior to sexual activity.

Very excited

The results of ensuing clinical studies conducted in the field of sexual health have also made medical experts very excited about the new drug breakthrough. The eye-opening feedback had come from the users of the oral agents themselves. A few months after it entered the US market, it turns out that the refill rate for vardenafil tripled that for tadalafil, based on the IMS National Prescription Audit. Patient surveys also pointed to vardenafil posting positive levels of satisfaction even in men who have been unsuccessfully treated with sildenafil. For these patients, satisfaction with vardenafil was generally attributed to efficacy, side effect profile, firmness of erection, and its fast-acting ability.

Top attributes

It turns out that the top attributes of a sex-enhancing drug which have raised expectations for an enhanced sexual life are that it works effectively every time, that it is safe and has few side effects. Clinical studies have shown that vardenafil fulfills all these criteria, having been shown to work reliably, rapidly and consistently over time.

Being highly selective and the most potent PDE5 inhibitor, vardenafil has been shown to take effect as quickly as 10 minutes after intake, and continues acting up to 12 hours, giving men the ability to be intimate when the moment is right for them, without worry that the drug stays in the body longer than necessary.

Further data presented at the European Association of Urology (EAU) which is the largest scientific urological organization in Europe confirmed that vardenafil provides reliable efficacy over time and even works rapidly in men who have reported lack of success with sildenafil. The PROVEN (Patient RespOnse with Vardenafil in Sildenafil Nonresponders) study was a prospec tive, multicenter, double-blind, flexible-dose study in 463 men with impaired sexual functioning who had a documented history of non-response to sildenafil. Findings show that men taking vardenafil had greater success-achieving erections sufficient for penetration than those receiving placebo at all-time intervals. The findings were presented earlier this year at the 19th European Association of Urology Congress in Vienna, Austria.

Indeed, the "sexual health drug" vardenafil has demonstrated the most rapid onset, to date, among PDE-5 inhibitors in the market today.

Significant response

A study presented in May 2004 at the 7th European Federation of Sexology showed that vardenafil had a statistically significant response superior to placebo at 10 and 11 minutes with 10 mg and 20 mg doses, respectively. The study, which assessed the earliest time elapsed from dosing to attainment of an erection adequate for penetration leading to completion of successful intercourse, signified that men can be confident and engage in a satisfying sexual experience when they want to.

Another study presented at the Congress pointed that speed of action is more important for men than long duration when it comes to sex-enhancing drugs.

SCISCOPE

Family physicians set conference

THE PHILIPPINE Academy of Family Physicians Inc. is holding its 44th annual convention from Feb. 24 to 26 at the Philippine International Convention Center with the theme "Family Medicine in the 21st Century: Directions and Projections."

The gathering will address today's most important issues on family medicine education and practice. Several scientific symposiums will be conducted. These will be complemented by an extensive pharmaceutical exhibit..

For details call the secretariat at 844-2135 or 844-3436.

Postgrad course

RESEARCH Institute for Tropical Medicine announces its 15th postgraduate course in tropical and infectious diseases slated March 16-18 at the RITM auditorium, Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa City.

There will be meet-the-expert forums, clinico-laboratory and radiological sessions and HIV counseling. This course is intended for medical practitioners, residents, pediatricians, family medicine physicians and internists. For details, call Nila Morante at 807-9603.

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

CONDO/TWNHSE

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MANILA

NR LA SALLE TAFT BnewTwnhse/ 4sty/3br/3tb/mdsrm/grge/deck P3.610M up 8903461

Nr. Taft LaSalle 1BR w/ pkg. security P2M 8509507

MANDALUYONG

CityLand Shaw 1BR 634-1212

PARANAQUE

MULTI NAT'L 177m² Up&Down semifurn 3br3tb mdsrm w/cr garage P3.5M nego Charo 8225479/5480Jimmy2548082

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MONACO TOWER DOMINGA ST PASAY near LA SALLE. ATTRACTIVE TERMS INT. FREE RUSH 1BR T7433121 7431977

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VARIED AREAS

MAKATI P2Mup 09177648987
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KALOOCAN

Rainbow Village 5 LA 216m² P3,473/m² Vic 8903461 loc 25

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PARANAQUE

BETTER LIVING 300sqm P4,000/sqm Call 8233407 Neg.

MERVILLE CORNER LOT LA 303 P10T/M²/BEST OFFER AL 8963416 09178933658

PASIG

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Exclusive Res'l Lot nr Ateneo/UP/Miriam 204m²@P8.5th 09189235216

KATIPUNAN EXT 3648sqm P9.5T Commercial Maid Rd Ideal for gas station / School / Convenience Store near UP / Ateneo Call 0918 - 9235216

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PNB
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PUBLIC AUCTION

FEBRUARY 17, 2005 • THURSDAY • 2:00 PM • PANGASINAN REGENCY HOTEL,
2nd Flr. Green Acres, Judge Jose de Venecia Sr. Ave., Naisian, Calasiao, Pangasinan

PANGASINAN

ALAMINOS

LOT 1 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 900 sqm.
Flr. Area: 118 sqm.
Lot No. 7048-P, Braganza Village, Poblacion
Min. Bid Price : 1,030,000.00

LOT 2 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 273 sqm.
Flr. Area: 60 sqm.
Lot 6368-Part, Existing Row, Pogo
Min. Bid Price : 134,000.00

LOT 3 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 2,136 sqm.
Flr. Area: 132 sqm.
Lot 4008-C, Brgy. Amandiego
Min. Bid Price : 1,040,000.00

LOT 4 - FISHPOND
Lot Area: 57,098 sqm.
Lot 2, Brgy. Pandan
Min. Bid Price : 2,355,000.00

LOT 5 - FISHPOND
Lot Area: 57,098 sqm.
Lot 3, Brgy. Pandan (Telbang Before)
Min. Bid Price : 2,227,000.00

LOT 6 - FISHPOND
Lot Area: 54,189 sqm.
Lot 4, Brgy. Pandan
Min. Bid Price : 2,041,000.00

BALUNGAO

LOT 7 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 478 sqm.
Lot 6, Interior Lot6 W/out Row, Pugaro
Min. Bid Price : 54,000.00

LOT 8 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 473 sqm.
Lot 12, Interior Lot W/out Row, Pugaro
Min. Bid Price : 54,000.00

LOT 9 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 480 sqm.
Lot 13, Along The Prov'L. Rd.Pugaro
Min. Bid Price : 137,000.00

LOT 10 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 470 sqm.
Lot 14, Interior Lot W/out Tow, Pugaro
Min. Bid Price : 53,000.00

BASISTA

LOT 11 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 1,601 sqm.
Lot 16403-B Dumpay
Min. Bid Price : 897,000.00

BAYAMBANG

LOT 12 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 240 sqm.
Lots 5, Brgy. Bical
Min. Bid Price : 81,000.00

LOT 13 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 240 sqm.
Lots 6, Brgy. Bical
Min. Bid Price : 81,000.00

BINALONAN

LOT 14 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 482 sqm.
Lot 155-E-1, 155-E-2, 155-E-3, (William Taft St.), Poblacion
Min. Bid Price : 246,000.00

BUGALLON

LOT 15 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 740 sqm.
Flr. Area: 80 sqm.
Lot No. 4331, Bravo St., Brgy. Magtaking
Min. Bid Price : 373,000.00

LOT 16 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 289 sqm.
Lot No. 6298-Part, Brgy. Asinan
Min. Bid Price : 124,000.00

CALASIAO

LOT 17 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 344 sqm.
Flr. Area: 84 sqm.
Lot No. 2-Part, Bued
Min. Bid Price : 341,000.00

LOT 18 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 447 sqm.
Flr. Area: 91 sqm.
Lot 4038-B & Lot 4038-D Sitio, Pandayan, Gabon
Min. Bid Price : 262,000.00

LOT 19 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 2,008 sqm.
Flr. Area: 118 sqm.
Lot 5 Brgy. Malabago
Min. Bid Price : 635,000.00

LOT 20 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 467 sqm.
Flr. Area: 90 sqm.
Lot 6729 Mancup
Min. Bid Price : 295,000.00

LOT 21 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 792 sqm.
Lot 621-A-Lot 16039 Brgy. Nalsian
Min. Bid Price : 642,000.00

LOT 22 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 325 sqm.
Flr. Area: 228 sqm.
Lot 1-16001 San Miguel
Min. Bid Price : 895,000.00

LOT 23 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 483 sqm.
Lot 1358 Interior Mac Arthur Highway, San Miguel
Min. Bid Price : 634,000.00

LOT 24 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 4,600 sqm.
Brgy. Talibaew
Min. Bid Price : 360,000.00

LOT 25 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 174 sqm.
Flr. Area: 68 sqm.
Lot 4390 Talibaew
Min. Bid Price : 70,000.00

DAGUPAN

LOT 26 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 403 sqm.
Lot 2-K Bonuan Boquig
Min. Bid Price : 485,000.00

LOT 27 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 2,860 sqm.
Lot 7764 Interior,Bonuan Boquig
Min. Bid Price : 744,000.00

LOT 28 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 2,000 sqm.
Lot 7266-B Sta Maria St., Bonuan Boquig
Min. Bid Price : 770,000.00

LOT 29 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 1,028 sqm.
Lot 7557-A-1 San Gabriel St., Bonuan Boquig ,
Min. Bid Price : 778,000.00

LOT 30 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 1,028 sqm.
Lot 7557-A-2 San Gabriel St., Bonuan Boquig
Min. Bid Price : 778,000.00

LOT 31 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 1,028 sqm.
Lot 7557-A-4-A San Gabriel St., Bonuan Boquig
Min. Bid Price : 778,000.00

LOT 32 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 1,029 sqm.
Lot 7557-A-4-B San Gabriel St., Bonuan Boquig
Min. Bid Price : 779,000.00

LOT 33 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 1,028 sqm.
Lot 7557-A-4-C San Gabriel St., Bonuan Boquig
Min. Bid Price : 778,000.00

LOT 34 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 1,796 sqm.
Lot 2-D Melendez St, Bonuan Boquig
Min. Bid Price : 881,000.00

LOT 35 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 586 sqm.
Lot 3811-C Interior, Careenan
Min. Bid Price : 1,407,000.00

LOT 36 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 789 sqm.
Flr. Area: 84 sqm.
Lot 5085-A-1, Lucao Dist.
Min. Bid Price : 1,505,000.00

LOT 37 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 343 sqm.
Flr. Area: 61 sqm.
Lot 4807-D Lucao Dist.
Min. Bid Price : 370,000.00

LOT 38 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 292 sqm.
Lot 6354-C Lasip Grande
Min. Bid Price : 500,000.00

LOT 39 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 190 sqm.
Flr. Area: 82 sqm.
Lot 5638-G, Rafael Perez Rd, Malued
Min. Bid Price : 734,000.00

LOT 40 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 239 sqm.
Flr. Area: 61 sqm.
Lot 2757-C, Brgy. Rd., Brgy. Mamalingling
Min. Bid Price : 416,000.00

LOT 41 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 352 sqm.
Flr. Area: 93 sqm.
Lot 2366-B, Brgy. Rd., Mangin Dist.
Min. Bid Price : 426,000.00

LOT 42 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 1,376 sqm.
Flr. Area: 248 sqm.
Lots 312-A-3, 311-C, & 314-F-1, Mayombo Dist.
Min. Bid Price : 6,583,000.00

LOT 43 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 240 sqm.
Lot 3-A-2 Int. Herrero-Perez
Min. Bid Price : 480,000.00

LOT 44 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 470 sqm.
Lot 674-B-2, Int. Pogo Chico
Min. Bid Price : 1,185,000.00

LOT 45 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 1,212 sqm.
Lot 4, Lot 3, Lot 2, Lot 1, Lot 6 Pogo Chico
Min. Bid Price : 1,690,000.00

LOT 46 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 326 sqm.
Flr. Area: 169 sqm.
Lot 1974-A, Brgy. Salisay
Min. Bid Price : 532,000.00

LOT 47 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 308 sqm.
Lot 1974-B, Brgy. Salisay
Min. Bid Price : 370,000.00

LOT 48 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 410 sqm,
Flr. Area: 99 sqm.
Lot 3195-B, Right Of Way, Tambac Dist.
Min. Bid Price : 1,036,000.00

LOT 49 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 185 sqm.
Flr. Area: 98 sqm.
Lot 1 Existing Road Lot, Tambac Dist.
Min. Bid Price : 935,000.00

LOT 50 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 686 sqm.
Flr. Area: 231 sqm.
Lot 2, Right Of Way, Tambac Dist.
Min. Bid Price : 1,317,000.00

LOT 51 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 750 sqm.
Lot 4 Tambac Dist.
Min. Bid Price : 1,080,000.00

LOT 52 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 1,034 sqm.
Lot 3847-A Interior Amado-Tapuac
Min. Bid Price : 1,520,000.00

LAOAC

LOT 53 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 2,312 sqm.
Flr. Area: 98 sqm.
Lot Nos. 1 & 2, Yatyat
Min. Bid Price : 418,000.00

LINGAYEN

LOT 54 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 800 sqm.
Flr. Area: 156 sqm.
Lot A, Pangapisan
Min. Bid Price : 1,123,000.00

LOT 55 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 1,050 sqm.
Flr. Area: 108 sqm.
Lot No. 8844-B, Brgy. Balococ West
Min. Bid Price : 352,000.00

LOT 56 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 779 sqm.
Flr. Area: 63 sqm.
Lot No. 14668, Solis Street, Poblacion
Min. Bid Price : 1,426,000.00

LOT 57 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 707 sqm.
Flr. Area: 80 sqm.
Lot Nos. 1-C-2, 1-C-3 & 1-C-5, Brgy. Domalandan East
Min. Bid Price : 524,000.00

MALASIQUI

LOT 58 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 1,306 sqm.
Lot 11046, Bacundao (West)
Min. Bid Price : 78,000.00

LOT 59 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 785 sqm.
Flr. Area: 105 sqm.
Lot 10935-B, Brgy. Balite
Min. Bid Price : 315,000.00

LOT 60 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 3,957 sqm.
Lot 6509-B-6-C & Lot 6509-B-6-E Brgy. Bawer
Min. Bid Price : 226,000.00

LOT 61 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 1,379 sqm.
Lot No. 29878, Bogtong
Min. Bid Price : 294,000.00

LOT 62 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 555 sqm.
Flr. Area: 117 sqm.
Lot 14514-D-1 Barang/Bolaoit
Min. Bid Price : 294,000.00

LOT 63 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 761 sqm.
Flr. Area: 96 sqm.
Lot 1953-A-1 Cabatling
Min. Bid Price : 198,000.00

LOT 64 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 3,021 sqm.
Lot 3-D Cabeldatan
Min. Bid Price : 245,000.00

LOT 65 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 2,173 sqm.
Lot 3-G Cabeldatan
Min. Bid Price : 176,000.00

LOT 66 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 13,361 sqm.
Lot 2 (Interior Lot) Cabeldatan
Min. Bid Price : 305,000.00

LOT 67 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 3,364 sqm.
Flr. Area: 168 sqm.
Lot 2 Cabeldatan
Min. Bid Price : 435,000.00

LOT 68 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 4,302 sqm.
Lot 2462-C Cabeldatan
Min. Bid Price : 267,000.00

LOT 69 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 2,305 sqm.
Flr. Area: 45 sqm.
Lot 3-A-2 Goliman
Min. Bid Price : 194,000.00

LOT 70 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 387 sqm.
Flr. Area: 211 sqm.
Lot 8505-C Lokeb (Norte)
Min. Bid Price : 333,000.00

LOT 71 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 967 sqm.
Flr. Area: 68 sqm.
Lot 8969-A Lokeb (Este)
Min. Bid Price : 255,000.00

LOT 72 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 2,451 sqm.
Flr. Area: 45 sqm.
Lot 8969-B Lokeb (Este)
Min. Bid Price : 350,000.00

LOT 73 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 1,331 sqm.
Lot 8824-L Lokeb Norte
Min. Bid Price : 158,000.00

LOT 74 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 617 sqm.
Flr. Area: 72 sqm.
Lot 8979-C Loqueb Este
Min. Bid Price : 159,000.00

LOT 75 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 2,987 sqm.
Lot No. 10780-N-1, Brgy. Asin/ Lunec
Min. Bid Price : 269,000.00

LOT 76 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 2,996 sqm.
Lot No. 10780-N-6, Brgy. Asin/ Lunec
Min. Bid Price : 204,000.00

LOT 77 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 4,270 sqm.
Lot No. 10780-N-7, Brgy. Asin/ Lunec
Min. Bid Price : 291,000.00

LOT 78 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 719 sqm.
Flr. Area: 89 sqm.
Lot 5314-B Nalsian Sur
Min. Bid Price : 652,000.00

LOT 79 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 12,651 sqm.
Lot 5599 Palong
Min. Bid Price : 625,000.00

LOT 80 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 3,206 sqm.
Flr. Area: 126 sqm.
Lot 430 Rizal St., Poblacion
Min. Bid Price : 2,234,000.00

LOT 81 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 187 sqm.
Flr. Area: 74 sqm.
Lot 730-F Poblacion(Diego Silang St.)
Min. Bid Price : 238,000.00

LOT 82 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 215 sqm.
Lot 735-B-3 Poblacion
Min. Bid Price : 164,000.00

LOT 83 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 1,056 sqm.
Flr. Area: 80 sqm.
Lot 6395-A San Julian
Min. Bid Price : 245,000.00

LOT 84 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 2,697 sqm.
Lot 2-A San Julian
Min. Bid Price : 358,000.00

LOT 85 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 633 sqm.
Flr. Area: 150 sqm.
Lot 8232-B Tabo-Sili
Min. Bid Price : 500,000.00

LOT 86 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 2,628 sqm.
Flr. Area: 135 sqm.
Lot 5393 Tomling
Min. Bid Price : 786,000.00

LOT 87 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 2,456 sqm.
Flr. Area: 99 sqm.
Lot 468-A Taloy
Min. Bid Price : 649,000.00

MANGALDAN

LOT 88 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 132 sqm.
Lot No. 27 Bo. Banaoang
Min. Bid Price : 88,000.00

LOT 89 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 252 sqm.
Lot 29 & 28 Bo. Banaoang
Min. Bid Price : 167,000.00

LOT 90 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 471 sqm.
Plan Swo-1-001735, Bo. Banaoang
Min. Bid Price : 198,000.00

LOT 91 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 701 sqm.
Plan Swo-1-0012558, Bo. Banaoang
Min. Bid Price : 295,000.00

LOT 92 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 132 sqm.
Lot 10 Bo. Banaoang
Min. Bid Price : 80,000.00

LOT 93 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 576 sqm.
Lot 8361, Brgy. Bantayan
Min. Bid Price : 231,000.00

LOT 94 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 343 sqm.
Flr. Area: 285 sqm.
Lot 1, Brgy. Bari,
Min. Bid Price : 1,204,000.00

LOT 95 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 898 sqm.
Lot 7 Bari
Min. Bid Price : 755,000.00

LOT 96 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 266 sqm.
Lot No. 2-B, Brgy. Guiguilongen
Min. Bid Price : 238,000.00

LOT 97 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 248 sqm.
Lot No. 2-C, No. 252, Guiguilongen
Min. Bid Price : 335,000.00

LOT 98 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 389 sqm.
Lot 3-E-8-H-3-D-5-B-3 Apostol Subd.,Guiguilonen
Min. Bid Price : 281,000.00

LOT 99 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 215 sqm.
Lot 7, Blk. V, Brgy. Navaluan
Min. Bid Price : 183,000.00

LOT 100 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 3,011 sqm.
Lot No. 3-F, Brgy. Nibaliw
Min. Bid Price : 641,000.00

Honeyland Subd., Tebag

LOT 101 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 200 sqm.
Lot 3 Blk. 1
Min. Bid Price : 190,000.00

LOT 102 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 606 sqm.
Lot 3,4,5 Blk. 2
Min. Bid Price : 485,000.00

LOT 103 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 200 sqm.
Lot 5 Blk. 4
Min. Bid Price : 190,000.00

LOT 104 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 287 sqm. Lot 6 Blk. 4
Min. Bid Price : 273,000.00

LOT 105 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 197 sqm.
Lot 2 Blk. 5
Min. Bid Price : 188,000.00

LOT 106 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 198 sqm.
Lot 4 Blk. 5
Min. Bid Price : 189,000.00

LOT 107 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 198 sqm.
Lot 6 Blk. 5
Min. Bid Price : 189,000.00

LOT 108 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 198 sqm.
Lot 8 Blk. 5
Min. Bid Price : 189,000.00

LOT 109 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 198 sqm.
Lot 10 Blk. 5
Min. Bid Price : 189,000.00

LOT 110 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 159 sqm.
Lot 12 Blk. 5
Min. Bid Price : 152,000.00

LOT 111 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 216 sqm.
Lot 14 Blk. 5
Min. Bid Price : 206,000.00

LOT 112 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 83 sqm.
Lot 1 Blk. 7
Min. Bid Price : 79,000.00

LOT 113 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 70 sqm.
Lot 2 Blk. 7
Min. Bid Price : 67,000.00

LOT 114 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 90 sqm.
Lot 3 Blk. 7
Min. Bid Price : 86,000.00

LOT 115 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 90 sqm.
Lot 4 Blk. 7
Min. Bid Price : 86,000.00

LOT 116 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 90 sqm.
Lot 5 Blk. 7
Min. Bid Price : 86,000.00

LOT 117 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 90 sqm.
Lot 6 Blk. 7
Min. Bid Price : 86,000.00

LOT 118 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 90 sqm.
Lot 8 Blk. 7
Min. Bid Price : 86,000.00

LOT 119 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 90 sqm.
Lot 10 Blk. 7
Min. Bid Price : 96,000.00

LOT 120 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 96 sqm.
Lot 11 Blk 7
Min. Bid Price : 92,000.00

LOT 121 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 80 sqm.
Lot 12 Blk. 7
Min. Bid Price : 76,000.00

MANGATAREM

LOT 122 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 462 sqm.
Flr. Area: 80 sqm.
Lot 1-B-1-B, Brgy. Torre 2Nd
Min. Bid Price : 224,000.00

POZORUBIO

LOT 123 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 2,418 sqm.
Lot 4-G, Along Brgy. Batakil Zone Iv,
Min. Bid Price : 617,000.00

LOT 124 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 2,649 sqm.
Flr. Area: 50 sqm.
Lot 7 Brgy. Diln
Min. Bid Price : 464,000.00

ROSALES

LOT 125 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 592 sqm.
Lot 2048-1-1, San Pedro (East)
Min. Bid Price : 121,000.00

LOT 126 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 300 sqm.
Lot 2048-1-2-B, San Pedro (East)
Min. Bid Price : 62,000.00

LOT 127 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 300 sqm.
Lot 2048-1-2 San Pedro(East)
Min. Bid Price : 72,000.00

LOT 128 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 600 sqm.
Lot 2048-1-3, San Pedro (East)
Min. Bid Price : 123,000.00

LOT 129 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 258 sqm.
Lot 2-A-7-A-4 Carmen
Min. Bid Price : 813,000.00

SAN CARLOS

LOT 130 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 2,280 sqm.
Flr. Area: 149 sqm.
Lot 20474-A & 20474-B, Brgy. Calobaoan
Min. Bid Price : 576,000.00

LOT 131 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 735 sqm.
Flr. Area: 48 sqm.
Lot 26795-B-2, Brgy. Pangoloan (Gamata Before)
Min. Bid Price : 141,000.00

LOT 132 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 827 sqm.
Flr. Area: 84 sqm.
Lot 28578-B, Pangalangan
Min. Bid Price : 216,000.00

LOT 133 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 433 sqm.
Flr. Area: 65 sqm.
Lot No. 6609-C, Doyong
Min. Bid Price : 139,000.00

LOT 134 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 88 sqm.
Flr. Area: 56 sqm.
Lot 5004-I, Interior (Padilla St.), Poblacion
Min. Bid Price : 335,000.00

LOT 135 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 88 sqm.
Lot 5004-J, Interior (Padilla St.), Poblacion
Min. Bid Price : 85,000.00

LOT 136 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 2,997 sqm.
Lot 6681, Brgy Rd., Brgy. Matagdem (Doyong Before)
Min. Bid Price : 325,000.00

LOT 137 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 1,131 sqm.
Lot 7, Brgy Rd., Brgy. Camata
Min. Bid Price : 216,000.00

LOT 138 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 676 sqm.
Lot 5571-B-1 Brgy. Cruz (Bolingit Before)
Min. Bid Price : 198,000.00

LOT 139 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 1,570 sqm.
Lot 24242-A Bogaoan(Salinas Before)
Min. Bid Price : 208,000.00

LOT 140 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 1,570 sqm.
Lot 24242-B Bogaoan(Salinas Before)
Min. Bid Price : 208,000.00

SAN QUINTIN

LOT 141 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 300 sqm.
Lot 6 Blk 3 Nangapugan
Min. Bid Price : 27,000.00

LOT 142 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 300 sqm.
Lot 11 Blk 3 Nangapugan
Min. Bid Price : 27,000.00

LOT 143 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 300 sqm.
Lot 12 Blk 3 Nangapugan
Min. Bid Price : 27,000.00

LOT 144 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 308 sqm.
Lot 6 Blk 9 Nangapugan
Min. Bid Price : 30,000.00

STA. BARBARA

LOT 145 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 290 sqm.
Maningding
Min. Bid Price : 359,000.00

LOT 146 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 626 sqm.
Flr. Area: 100 sqm.
Lot 1 Bahaguero
Min. Bid Price : 453,000.00

LOT 147 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 248 sqm.
Lot 3 Brgy. Banaoang
Min. Bid Price : 84,000.00

LOT 148 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 286 sqm.
Lot 4-B Brgy. Banaoang
Min. Bid Price : 97,000.00

STO. TOMAS

LOT 149 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 1,340 sqm.
Flr. Area: 200 sqm.
Lot 3-B-4-K, Lot 3-B-1 & Lot 3-B-2 San Antonio
Min. Bid Price : 1,767,000.00

UMINGAN

LOT 150 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 679 sqm.
Flr. Area: 48 sqm.
Lot 9-H-57, La Paz (Now Cabaruan)
Min. Bid Price : 94,000.00

LUNA ESTE (PRADO)

LOT 151 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 557 sqm.
Lot 5639-A & Lot 5639-Aaa
Min. Bid Price : 32,000.00

LOT 152 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 420 sqm.
Lot 5639-Bbb
Min. Bid Price : 17,000.00

LOT 153 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 417 sqm.
Lot 5639-Bbb-4
Min. Bid Price : 17,000.00

LOT 154 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 1,791 sqm.
Lot 5639-Bbb-6, Lot 5639-Bbb-7, Lot5639-Bbb-8 & Lot5639-Bbb-9
Min. Bid Price : 65,000.00

LOT 155 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 1,359 sqm.
Lot 5639-Bbb 13, Lot 5639-Bbb 14 & Lot 5639-Bbb 15
Min. Bid Price : 54,000.00

LOT 156 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 475 sqm.
Lot 5639-Hh
Min. Bid Price : 31,000.00

LOT 157 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 447 sqm.
Lot 5639-J
Min. Bid Price : 21,000.00

LOT 158 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 498 sqm.
Lot 5639-Kk
Min. Bid Price : 24,000.00

LOT 159 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 1,160 sqm.
Lot 5639-Nn
Min. Bid Price : 61,000.00

LOT 160 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 1,160 sqm.
Lot 5639-Oo
Min. Bid Price : 61,000.00

LOT 161 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 1,114 sqm.
Lot 5639-Tt
Min. Bid Price : 59,000.00

LOT 162 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 475 sqm.
Lot 5639-Uu
Min. Bid Price : 25,000.00

LOT 163 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 447 sqm.
Lot 5639-V
Min. Bid Price : 18,000.00

LOT 164 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 1,160 sqm.
Lot 5639-Yy
Min. Bid Price : 61,000.00

LOT 165 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 475 sqm.
Lot 5639-Xx
Min. Bid Price : 25,000.00

LOT 166 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 1,160 sqm.
Lot 5639-Zz
Min. Bid Price : 61,000.00

LOT 167 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 800 sqm.
Lot 4 Blk 1 & Lot 2 Blk 1
Min. Bid Price : 36,000.00

LOT 168 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 379 sqm.
Lot 1 Blk 2
Min. Bid Price : 18,000.00

LOT 169 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 973 sqm.
Lot 5 Blk. 3 & Lot 6 Blk 3
Min. Bid Price : 31,000.00

LOT 170 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 401 sqm.
Lot 5 Blk. 4
Min. Bid Price : 18,000.00

LOT 171 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 408 sqm.
Lot 7 Blk. 7
Min. Bid Price : 17,000.00

LOT 172 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 1,957 sqm.
Lot 1 Blk. 8, Lot 2 Blk. 8, Lot 3 Blk. 8, Lot 4 Blk. 8 & Lot 5 Blk. 8
Min. Bid Price : 66,000.00

LOT 173 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 416 sqm.
Lot 1 Blk. 9
Min. Bid Price : 24,000.00

LOT 174 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 395 sqm.
Lot 3 Blk 9 Luna
Min. Bid Price : 19,000.00

LOT 175 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 395 sqm.
Lot 4 Blk. 9
Min. Bid Price : 19,000.00

LOT 176 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 395 sqm.
Lot 5 Blk 9 Luna Este
Min. Bid Price : 19,000.00

LOT 177 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 395 sqm.
Lot 6 Blk. 9
Min. Bid Price : 19,000.00

VILLASIS

LOT 178 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 430 sqm.
Lot 5190-A, Amamperez
Min. Bid Price : 7,000.00

LOT 179 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 1,000 sqm.
Lot 5445-B-5-A San Nicolas
Min. Bid Price : 240,000.00

LOT 180 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 1,000 sqm.
Lot 5445-B-5-B San Nicolas
Min. Bid Price : 240,000.00

LOT 181 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 415 sqm.
Lot 4-A & Lot 4-C-3 Poblacion
Min. Bid Price : 495,000.00

BAGUIO

LOT 182 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 350 sqm.
Flr. Area: 381 sqm.
Lot 1-C-5-R-3-D-1, Alley 7, No. 39 Mirador Hills
Min. Bid Price : 3,429,000.00

LOT 183 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 160 sqm.
Lot 1-C-5-R-3-D-2, Alley 7, No. 39 Mirador Hills
Min. Bid Price : 608,000.00

Green Summerville, Bakakeng

LOT 184 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 169 sqm.
Lot 14, Blk. 3
Min. Bid Price : 216,000.00

LOT 185 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 158 sqm.
Lot 15 Blk. 3
Min. Bid Price : 202,000.00

LOT 186 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 200 sqm.
Lot 16, Blk. 8,
Min. Bid Price : 425,000.00

LOT 187 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 219 sqm.
Lot 17, Blk. 14
Min. Bid Price : 417,000.00

LOT 188 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 200 sqm.
Lot 27, Blk. 8
Min. Bid Price : 180,000.00

LOT 189 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 194 sqm.
Lot 35, Blk. 1
Min. Bid Price : 219,000.00

LOT 190 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 182 sqm.
Lot 44, Blk. 2
Min. Bid Price : 233,000.00

LOT 191 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 150 sqm.
Lot 27, Blk. 5, Eagle Crest Villas, Bakakeng Norte
Min. Bid Price : 642,000.00

LOT 192 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 342 sqm.
Lot 1-B-1, Bakakeng Central
Min. Bid Price : 223,000.00

LOT 193 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 5,000 sqm.
Lot 32-J-7-E-1, Int. Km. 3, San Luis Village, Brgy. Asin
Min. Bid Price : 650,000.00

LOT 194 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 1,000 sqm.
Lot 117-H-1-F-2, Int. South Sto. Tomas, Brgy. I.Marcos
Min. Bid Price : 300,000.00

LOT 195 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 66 sqm.
Flr. Area: 104 sqm.
Lot 1, No. 040, Callejon St., Purok 13, Brgy. Irisan
Min. Bid Price : 721,000.00

LOT 196 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 417 sqm.
Flr. Area: 477 sqm.
Lot 28-A-7, Upper Market, Camp Allen
Min. Bid Price : 4,758,000.00

LOT 197 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 414 sqm.
Lot 1-D-12-B-2-B, Clupis Village
Min. Bid Price : 634,000.00

LOT 198 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 861 sqm.
Lot 9, Interior Crystal Cave
Min. Bid Price : 136,000.00

LOT 199 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 786 sqm.
Lot 4-C, Crystal Cave
Min. Bid Price : 1,769,000.00

LOT 200 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 390 sqm.
Lot 3-B, Int. Camp 7, Kennon Road
Min. Bid Price : 498,000.00

LOT 201 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 1,248 sqm.
Lot 7-C, Int. Marcos Highway
Min. Bid Price : 874,000.00

LOT 202 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 38 sqm.
Flr. Area: 89 sqm.
Lot 1-B-8-M-1-A-1, Along Marcos Highway
Min. Bid Price : 624,000.00

LOT 203 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 3,220 sqm.
Lot 1-A, Teacher'S Village, Marcos Highway
Min. Bid Price : 2,941,000.00

LOT 204 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 717 sqm.
Lot 1-C-5-P-29-A, Int. St. Theresa St., Mirador Hills
Min. Bid Price : 1,707,000.00

LOT 205 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 596 sqm.
Lot 1-B-10, Interior San Luis Village
Min. Bid Price : 205,000.00

LOT 206 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 500 sqm.
Lot 5-H, Int. Km 5 San Luis Village
Min. Bid Price : 188,000.00

LOT 207 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 2,150 sqm.
Lot 4, Blk. 10, Sunnyside Subd.
Min. Bid Price : 888,000.00

LOT 208 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 750 sqm.
Lot 7, Blk. 6, Sunnyside Subd.
Min. Bid Price : 354,000.00

LOT 209 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 750 sqm.
Lot 8, Blk. 6, Sunnyside Subd.
Min. Bid Price : 354,000.00

LOT 210 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 750 sqm.
Lot 9, Blk. 6, Sunnyside Subd.
Min. Bid Price : 354,000.00

LOT 211 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 750 sqm.
Lot 10, Blk. 6, Sunnyside Subd.
Min. Bid Price : 354,000.00

LOT 212 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 2,332 sqm.
Lot 16, Blk. 3, Sunnyside Subd.
Min. Bid Price : 964,000.00

BENGUET

LOT 213 - LOT AND IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 522 sqm.
Calutol Bonnoc, Mountain Province
Min. Bid Price : 861,000.00

LOT 214 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 1,741 sqm.
Pey-Asan, Otucan Sur, Bauko, Mt. Province
Min. Bid Price : 775,000.00

LOT 215 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 1,807 sqm.
Lot 1-P, Bo. Bulalacao, Mankayan
Min. Bid Price : 1,133,000.00

LOT 216 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 1,124 sqm.
Lot 1-G, Bo. Bulalacao, Mankayan
Min. Bid Price : 658,000.00

LOT 217 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 300 sqm.
Tubo, Sapid, Mankayan
Min. Bid Price : 1,083,000.00

LOT 218 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 4,104 sqm.
Lot 3, Bo. Taneg, Mankayan
Min. Bid Price : 3,650,000.00

LOT 219 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 2,500 sqm.
Lot 3, Along Peril-Samoyao Road, Bo. Of Alapang, La Trinidad
Min. Bid Price : 935,000.00

LOT 220 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 2,500 sqm.
Lot 4, Along Peril-Samoyao Road, Bo. Alapang, La Trinidad
Min. Bid Price : 825,000.00

LOT 221 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 2,500 sqm.
Lot 6, Along Peril-Samoyao, Bo. Of Alapang, La Trinidad
Min. Bid Price : 935,000.00

LOT 222 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 1,000 sqm.
Lot 2-A, Brgy. Pico, La Trinidad
Min. Bid Price : 2,975,000.00

LOT 223 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 2,203 sqm.
Lot 1, Interior Long—Long, La Trinidad
Min. Bid Price : 414,000.00

LOT 224 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 1,243 sqm.
Lot 1-B Along Bahong Road, La Trinidad
Min. Bid Price : 373,000.00

LOT 225 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 1,309 sqm.
Lot 1-A, Km. 6, Asin Road, Tuba
Min. Bid Price : 1,473,000.00

LOT 226 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 1,000 sqm.
Lot 2-B-1-B-4, Brgy. Sto. Tomas, Tuba
Min. Bid Price : 150,000.00

LOT 227 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 801 sqm.
Lot H-27 Brgy. Irisan, Tadiangan, Tuba
Min. Bid Price : 495,000.00

LA UNION

LOT 228 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 1,785 sqm.
Flr. Area: 63 sqm.
Lot 1330, Nat'L. Hway, Taboc, San Juan
Min. Bid Price : 796,000.00

LOT 229 - LOT W/ MAKESHIFT IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 3,214 sqm.
Lot 10335-A-1, Ortega St., Brgy. Natividad, Naguilian
Min. Bid Price : 451,000.00

LOT 230 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 1,500 sqm.
Lot 10355-A-2, Ortega St., Brgy. Natividad, Naguilian
Min. Bid Price : 210,000.00

LOT 231 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 385 sqm.
Flr. Area: 107 sqm.
Lot 1016 Pt., No. 24, Sta. Monica St., Poblacion Central, Sto. Tomas
Min. Bid Price : 235,000.00

LOT 232 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 200 sqm.
Flr. Area: 59 sqm.
Lot 1016 Pt., No 24, Sta. Monica St. Cor Sto. Domingo St, Poblacion Central, Sto Tomas
Min. Bid Price : 170,000.00

LOT 233 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 166 sqm.
Flr. Area: 63 sqm.
Lot 6-A, No. 11 Northville Subd., Dalumpinas, Sfe
Min. Bid Price : 494,000.00

LOT 234 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 1,000 sqm.
Lot 2 (484-D), Brgy Madayegdeg, City Of San Fernando
Min. Bid Price : 563,000.00

LOT 235 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 3,242 sqm.
Flr. Area: 68 sqm.
Lot 2391, Brgy. Rd., Santiago Sur, Caba
Min. Bid Price : 247,000.00

LOT 236 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 200 sqm.
Lot 7, Blk. 1, Corazon Farm Subdivision, Poblacion East, Caba
Min. Bid Price : 68,000.00

LOT 237 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 200 sqm.
Lot 14, Blk. 1, Corazon Farm Subdivision, Poblacion East, Caba
Min. Bid Price : 68,000.00

LOT 238 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 200 sqm.
Lot 16, Blk. 1, Corazon Farm Subdivision, Poblacion East, Caba La Union
Min. Bid Price : 68,000.00

LOT 239 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 200 sqm.
Lot 23, Blk. 1, Corazon Farm Subdivision, Poblacion East, Caba
Min. Bid Price : 60,000.00

LOT 240 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 200 sqm.
Lot 26, Blk. 1, Corazon Farm Subdivision, Poblacion East, Caba
Min. Bid Price : 60,000.00

LOT 241 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 200 sqm.
Lot 7, Blk. 3, Corazon Farm Subdivision Poblacion East, Caba
Min. Bid Price : 68,000.00

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SAN MIGUEL BUL 4000m² P165/m² Vic 8903461 loc 27

CAVITE

DON BOSCO EXEC HTS LA128m2 P2,900/m2 Vic 8903461 loc 27

PARKPLACE SUBD LA149.30m² P6,028/m² Vic 8903461 loc 27

PARKPLACE SUBD LA120m² P5,750/m² Vic 8903461 loc 27

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LOT

CAVITE

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Nr Chin. Gen Mla 7836781

P200I Sucat Pque 8275345

Proj4 QC Rooms 9139635

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BURGUNDY PLAZA KATIPUNAN Q.C. FRNT ATENEO FA103, 75 IDEAL FOR SPA GYM CALL CENTER & 60 m² (residential) 9289541 / 7361925

CUBAO Shp 500m² 25T 7257342

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FINANCING-EASY FAST VERY PRIVATE CONVENIENT H/L BUSINESS PERSONAL Gigie Emie 8903461 loc 25/23

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02 Civic VTI 585T a/t 4267915

02CivicVTI 575T m/t 9254566

CTY EXI '97 P235 A/T 1ST OWN RED 5895691 09208119384

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1.5% w/oTaking Car 3650974/75

1.5% w/oTaking Car 7228942-43

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•1HR Fast Car Loan 7125202•

2% w/o taking car 7880183-84

2% w/o Taking Car 7262780

2% w/oTaking Car 6969454

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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late BIENVENIDO A. LAPUT has been extrajudicially settled by his heirs before notary public Lucila M. Lawas-Yuton as per Doc 161, Page 33; Book 448 Series of 2004 (PDI-Feb. 5, 12, 19, 2005)

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

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Global Implementation Manager

World Vision

World Vision International, an International Christian humanitarian organization and works in approx. 100 countries. In support of our Child Sponsorship Program we have developed a support management system, which will be implemented in over 65 countries. We are looking for a mature, self-motivated & experienced individual who can lead the Global Implementation Effort of this product. This person will provide leadership to the Global Implementation Team. This position will be based in Manila and has an initial contract period of 2 years.

Requirements necessary for the success of this position are:
- Bachelors' degree in Business Management or Information Technology Management with a focus on planning, implementation and monitoring of large-scale projects or equivalent work experience.
- 4+ years of experience at management level positions with emphasis implementing systems, change management, and training.
- Experience in coordinating implementation of large-scale projects, preferably in multiple countries.
- Proven leadership in Global Implementation plans and proven success in project management.
- Strong problem solving skills.
- Extensive travel to various countries is required.
- Strong Christian commitment as evidenced by life and character.
- Proven success in project management and systems implementation is essential.
- Excellent interpersonal skills and ability to work as part of a team both directly and virtually.
- Able to effectively communicate with all levels in the organization (verbally and in writing).
- Fluency in English is required; knowledge of Spanish and French is desired.
- Must have a service-oriented mind-set.
- Ability to consult widely, bring together diverse views and facilitate agreement on critical issues.
- Ability to work effectively in a complex, global organization.

MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES:
- Prepare a detailed global implementation.
- To monitor and evaluate the quality and progress of implementation to ensure consistent application of the training, implementation and change management standards.
- Provide problem–solving and supportive facilitation to implementation.
- Manage the Implementation Budget.

Please send your CV to Marisse Lego by email at marisse_lego@wvi.org or by mail at Box 13664 Ortigas Center Post Office, Pasig City 1605. Applications should be received no later than February 12, 2005.

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given that Plates No. NYA-680 registered in the name of DIONISIO M. MAQUIO, was lost per Affidavit of Loss dated Jan. 26, 2005 under the Notarial Registry of Atty. Leonardo F. Gonzales as Doc. 04; Page 01; Book 101; Series of 2005.
(PDI-Jan. 29 Feb. 5 & 12, 2005)

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NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given that Plates No. NXT-520 registered in the name of EM TRANSPORT CORPORATION, was lost per Affidavit of Loss dated Nov. 23, 2004 under the Notarial Registry of Atty. Rodolfo L. Lopez as Doc. 339; Page. 66; Book XIX-A; Series of 2004.
(PDI–Feb. 5, 12 & 19, 2005)

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Job Description: Prepare presentation exhibits and maps that support urban design solutions, urban planning proposals, and general presentations to upper management. Assesses current land database of the Planning Authority to capture required planning data and reorganize data in such a fashion to be used for analysis;

Required Skills: The candidate should have 5 years experience in drafting architectural and planning presentations, graphic design, mapping, and/or geography;

Education: BS/BA in planning, architectural design, graphic design, or a related field.

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P300
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P300
Burger King
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Dumaguete
Sales Office

JOCELYN J. HIZON
CAMANAVA
Sales Office

Please be informed that JULIETO C. GASPER of Dumaguete Sales Office and JOCELYN J. HIZON of CAMANAVA Sales Office, whose pictures appear above, have ceased to be connected as Agents of GREAT PACIFIC LIFE ASSURANCE CORPORATION (GREPALIFE) effective at the close of working hours of November 12, 2004 and June 30, 2004 respectively. All transactions entered into by these persons on behalf of the Company will no longer be honored.

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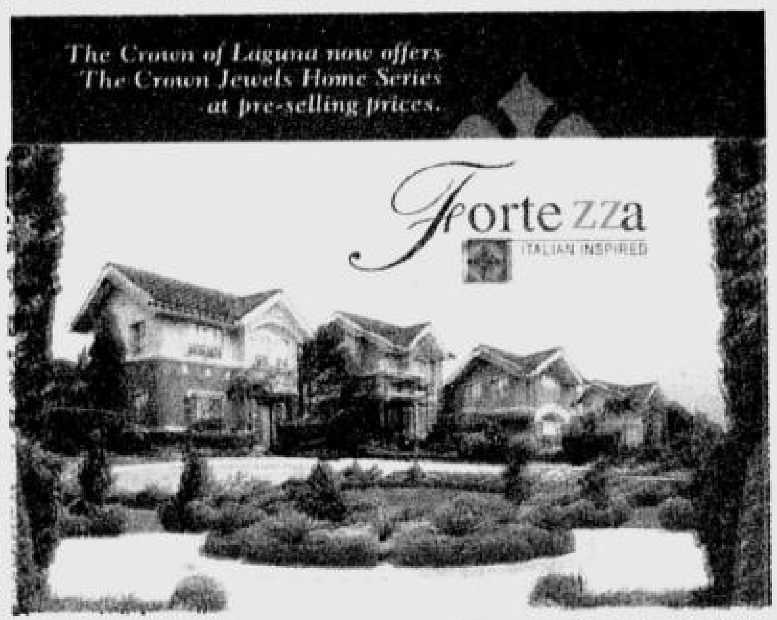

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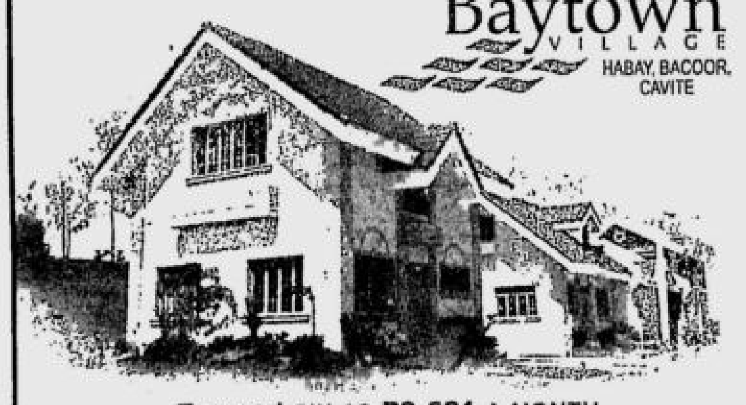

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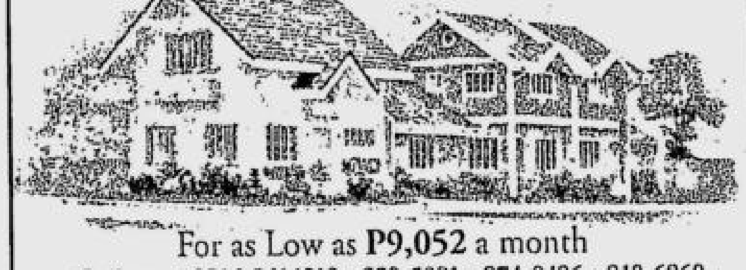

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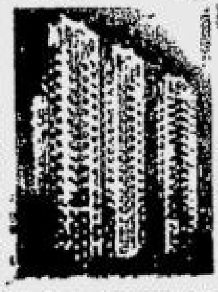

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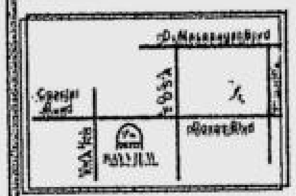

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our dearly beloved

WILLIAM F. GEMPERLE

(† February 6, 1983)
especially on his 22nd death anniversary

Holy Mass will be offered tomorrow, Sunday, February 6, 2005 at the following churches:

St. Alphonsus Mary de Liguori Church Magallanes Village, Makati City	7:00 AM, 8:00 AM, 9:00 AM 10:00 AM, 11:00 AM, 12:00 NN 5:00 PM, 6:00 PM, 7:00 PM, 8:00 PM and 9:00 PM
Santuario de San Antonio Forbes Park, Makati City	6:30 AM, 7:45 AM, 9:00 AM 10:30 AM, 12:00 NN, 4:30 PM, and 6:00 PM
St. John Bosco Parish Church Makati City	7:30 AM, 10:00 AM & 4:30 PM
Sto. Nino de Paz Chapel Greenbelt, Makati	10:30 AM, 12:00 NN, and 4:30 PM
St. James Parish Church Ayala Alabang	8:00 AM, 10:00 AM, 4:30 PM 6:00 PM, and 7:30 PM
St. Jerome & St. Susana Parish Ayala Alabang	6:30 AM, 8:30 AM, 11:00 AM, 5:00 PM, 6:00 PM, and 7:00 PM
St. Benedict Church Alabang Hills	7:45 AM, 11:00 AM, and 6:30 PM
Presentation of the Child Jesus Parish BF Homes, Paranaque City	9:00 AM, and 6:30 PM
Parish Church of the Resurrection BF Homes, Paranaque City	5:30 AM, 6:30 AM, 8:00 AM, 9:30 AM, 11:00 AM, 5:00 PM, 6:30 PM, and 8:00 PM
St. Joseph Parish, Tambo, Paranaque	6:00 PM
St. Joseph (Bamboo Organ) Church, Las Pinas	6:00 AM
St. Andrew Parish, La Huerta, Paranaque	7:00 AM
Shrine of Jesus the Way, the Truth and the Life Pope John Paul II Youth Center	6:00 AM and 5:30 PM
Our Lady of Sorrows Church, FB Harisson, Pasay	6:00 AM
Nuestra Señora de Guia Church, Ermita Manila	8:00 AM and 9:00 AM
Our Lady of Remedies, Malate Church	8:00 AM and 9:00 AM
St. Columban Church, Olongapo City	7:30 AM and 4:30 PM
San Roque Chapel, SBMA, Olongapo City	10:30 AM and 5:00 PM

We, his family, sincerely thank our relatives, friends, and readers for kindly remembering him in prayer.

Our Beloved

Herminia San Juan Layson

peacefully slipped away on January 30, 2005
at the Loma Linda Medical Center, Loma Linda, CA.

Born in the Philippines on October 4, 1926, she had lived in the United States over 14 years. She was a School Teacher, Businesswoman, Loving Wife, Mother and Grandmother, a good Person who touched the lives and made a difference in the lives of others. She'll be forever remembered as a woman full of love, warmth and generosity of heart, a simple woman of grace and elegance. She will be greatly missed by her Husband, **Abundio "Bons" C. Layson**, Children - **Manuel, Joseph, Miyet, Bong** and **Menchie**, Daughters-in-Law - **Cecile, Aimee, Loida** and Sons-in-Law, **Henry** and **Greg**. She was loving and caring LOLA to **Chasty, Mark, BJ, Franchesca, Risha, Gelline, Margarita, Krista, Alexandra, Kassandra, Kacey, Sabrina** and **Kaitlyn**. Her only sibling and Best Friend **Amalia Barizo**, nephews and nieces will sorely miss her. Family and Friends are invited to a Viewing from 5 PM to 9 PM on Friday Feb. 4, 2005 at the Montecito Memorial Park in Loma Linda. A Celebration of Life Service will be held from 5 PM to 7 PM on Saturday, Feb 5th at the Loma Linda Filipino Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Redlands, CA. Memorial Service will be on Sunday Feb 6th at 9:30 AM at the Loma Linda Filipino SDA Church and Interment will follow at 11:30 AM at the Montecito Memorial Park (909) 825-3024 with a reception following at the Loma Linda Filipino SDA Church's Fellowship Hall. In lieu of Flowers, please contribute to the Saint John Foundation (thru the Art of Giving) an Organization founded by Herminia Layson, dedicated to helping the needy.

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Leticia Sta. Maria Punongbayan

May 11, 1936 – February 3, 2005

"Many women do noble things,
but you surpass them all."
Proverbs 31:29

Wife of **Eddie R. Punongbayan**; mother of **Dr. Susan Punongbayan** and **Liza & Bong Manayon**; grandmother of **Erika** and **James Manayon**; sister of **Fe Sta. Maria-Moore** and **Sammy, Danny, Esther O'Connor, Joel, Zeck, Gabby, Becky Barradas, Tanny**; sister-in-law of **Erlin** and **Flor Punongbayan**.

The wake will be held at the Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue on February 4 & 5 with services at 7 P.M. Interment Service will be held at the Union Church of Manila, Legazpi cor. Rada Streets, Legazpi Village, Makati, February 6, at 2 P.M.

LEONCIO LAO UY CANA

Died peacefully in the Grace of our Lord on February 03, 2005 at the age of 82.

His bereaved family, relatives and friends request the readers to join them in praying for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Chapel 8, La Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

On February 7, 2005 his remains will be transferred to Enriquez Funeraria, **Tarlac City** after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.

Interment will be at Eternal Memorial Park, Tarlac City after the 8:00 a.m. Mass on Tuesday, February 8, 2005.

On the
Thirty Ninth Death Anniversary of

NARCISA B. DE LEON

We lovingly remember and once more offer HOLY MASSES tomorrow, SUNDAY, February 6, 2005, at 11:00 A.M. at the family residence at 35 Doña Juana Rodriguez, New Manila, Quezon City and at the following churches

MINOR BASILICA OF THE BLACK NAZARENE Parish of St. John the Baptist, Quiapo, Manila	5:00 A.M.
MARY the QUEEN Parish, Greenhills, Metro Manila	6:00 A.M.
LA NAVAL DE MANILA, Santo Domingo Church, Q.C.	6:00 A.M.
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH, San Juan, M.M.	6:00 A.M.
ST. JOHN BOSCO PARISH, Arnaiz St., Makati City	6:00 A.M.
SANTUARIO DE SAN JOSE, Greenhills, Mandaluyong City	6:15 A.M.
CHRIST THE KING, E. Rodriguez, Sr. Blvd., Q.C.	6:30 A.M.
ST. VINCENT DE PAUL PARISH, San Marcelino, Ermita, Mla.	6:30 A.M.
MANILA METROPOLITAN CATHEDRAL, Intramuros, Mla.	7:00 A.M.
IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CATHEDRAL PARISH, Lantana, Cubao	7:15 A.M.
SANTUARIO DE SAN ANTONIO, Forbes Park, Makati City	7:30 A.M.
OUR LADY OF EDSA, Edsa cor. Ortigas Ave., Q.C.	8:00 A.M.
STA. CRUZ PARISH, Sta. Cruz Church, Sta. Cruz, Manila	9:30 A.M.
MT. CARMEL SHRINE, Juana Rodriguez, New Manila, Q.C.	6:00 P.M.

We, her family, request relatives, friends and the pious readers to join us in our prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.
Matthew 10:39

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For further inquiries, please contact Ms. Carmela M. Ocasion (cp# 09192885303) or Ms. Cleopatra Q. Palencia (cp# 09163021735) with Tel. Nos. 926-2401 locals 3234, 3235, 3236 & 3237 and Telefax 926-9822, or you can email to oer@phc.gov.ph

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Sealed bids should be dropped in a bid box provided at Room 718 not later than **2:00 P.M., February 28, 2005** upon which bids shall be opened in the presence of participating bidders.

A bidders deposit of One Hundred Thousand Pesos (P100,000.00) in the form of cash, cashier's or manager's check is required. Bid indicated should be inclusive of ten (10%) percent Value Added Tax (VAT).

PNOC-STC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any formality or infirmities found therein, or to accept such bids as may be advantageous to the company.

(Sgd.) JOCELYN G. ATOTUBO
Chairperson-Disposal Committee

(PDI–Feb. 5, 2005)

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Quezon City

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

The National Food Authority (NFA) is inviting all eligible palay Farmers' Organizations (FOs) to participate in the distribution of rice under the "INSTITUTIONALIZED FARMERS AS DISTRIBUTORS" (IFAD) Program of the National Food Authority.

All interested parties are advised to accomplish a Letter of Intent (LOI), copies of which are available at the NFA Provincial Offices in their respective areas, to be submitted within ten (10) working days after the last day of publication. They should likewise meet the following qualifications:

- Must be operational and registered with any of the appropriate registering agencies as listed below.
  - Cooperative Development Authority (CDA)
  - Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)
  - Bureau of Labor Relations (BLR)
  - Bureau of Rural Workers (BRW)
  - National Irrigation Administration (NIA)
- Must be member of a local farmers' action council or the Philippine Farmers' Advisory Board (PFAB).
- Must be a holder of NFA license as retailer/wholesaler and other incidental lines of activities, i.e., warehousing and transporting, if any.
- Must be a holder of Certificate of Operations and Good Standing issued by the appropriate registering agency, to be submitted to the concerned NFA Provincial Office.

Specifically, the NFA has allocated a total volume of some 1,000,000 bags of rice, 25% BKN, for this Program distributed among regions as follows:

Region	Allocation
NCR	10,000
Ilocos Region	90,000
Cagayan Valley	130,000
Central Luzon	140,000
Southern Tagalog	90,000
Bicol	70,000
Western Visayas	150,000
Central Visayas	20,000
Eastern Visayas	60,000
Western Mindanao	40,000
Northern Mindanao	30,000
Southern Mindanao	30,000
Central Mindanao	70,000
ARMM	40,000
CARAGA	30,000

For details, they may coordinate with the nearest NFA Office in their respective areas. For further inquiries, they may visit or contact NFA-DMO located at the 5th Flr., Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez Sr., Avenue, Quezon City with telephone nos. 712-1572, 712-1708 or 712-1564.

(Sgd.) GREGORIO Y. TAN, JR.
Administrator

(PDI - February 3, 4 & 5, 2005)

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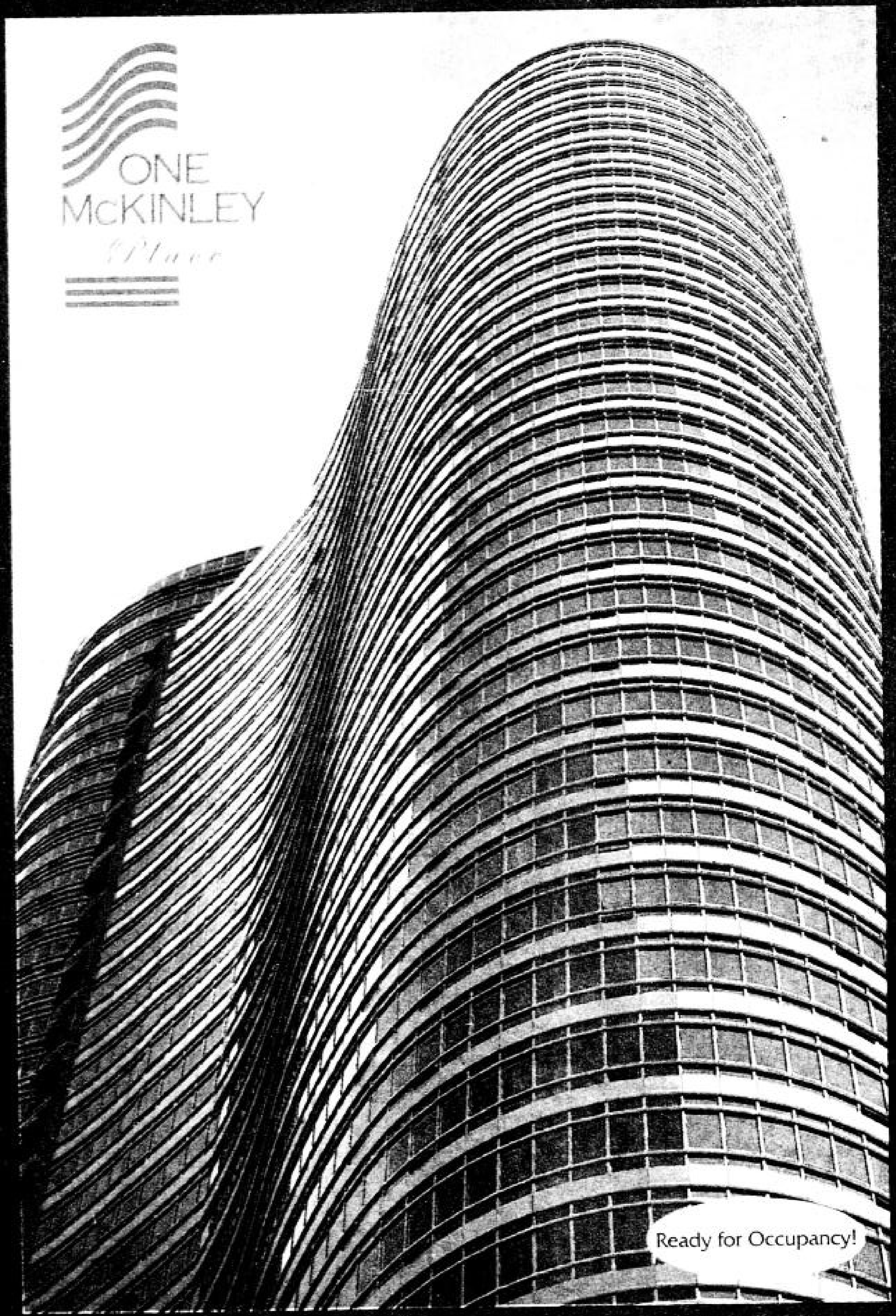

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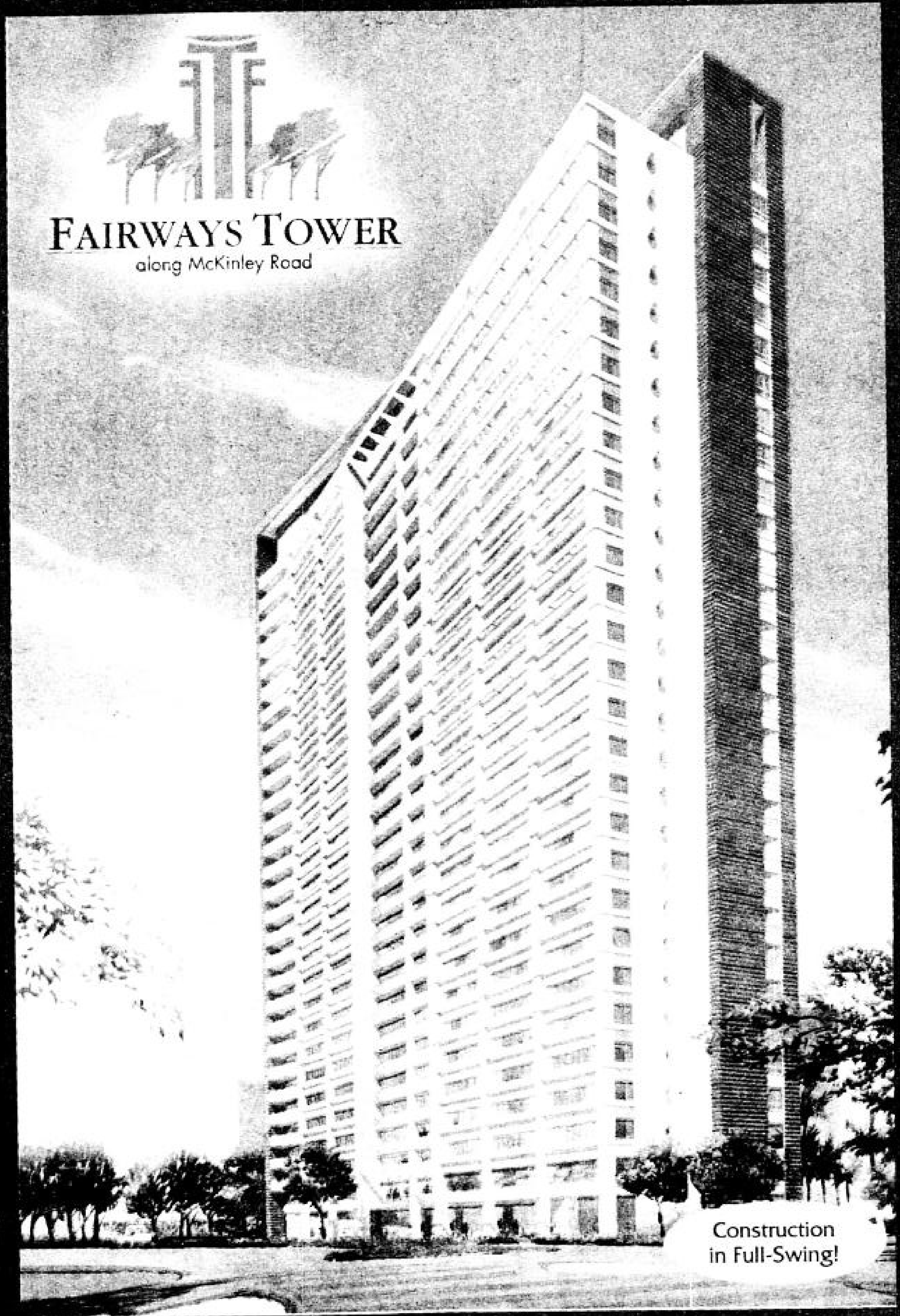

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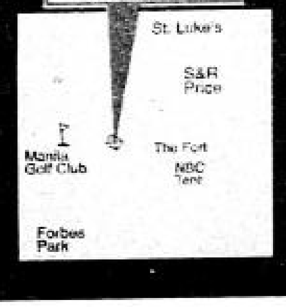

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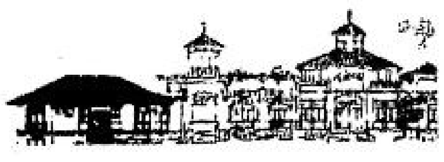
Editor **Cesar D. Mangawang**



Pag-Ibig allots P22-B package to lenders, developers

PAG-IBIG
1000

By Charles E. Buban

THE YEAR has started off on a high note for Home Development Mutual Fund, more popularly known as the Pag-Ibig Fund, when it announced it has allotted P22 billion to individual lenders as well as developers.

Pag-Ibig president and CEO Romero Federico Quimbo announced that some P18.5 billion will be available this year for end-user/retail financing. Of the P12 billion allotted last year, P14.78 billion was the actual takeout for retail financing, he added.

According to him, another P3.5 billion will be available for developmental financing, which will include allocation for deferred approvals in 2004 and 2005, as well as the budget for medium-rise buildings.

The announcement was made during a task force meeting last Jan. 25, which was attended by officers and members of Subdivision and Housing Developers Association.

Unprecedented

Quimbo said the housing sector has achieved an "unprecedented level of success in the past three years."

For its part, Pag-Ibig has rationalized and liberalized the housing loan program, resulting in over P36 billion in housing loans released for both end-user financing and institutional loans during the present administration alone.

This translates to a total of 242,037 housing units.

More housing units

"This is great news for us developers who are planning projects geared to Pag-Ibig members, particularly in providing low-cost and socialized housing," said Marilu Alferez, SHDA national president.

Socialized housing refers to housing units which are within the affordability level of the average and low-income earners which is 30 percent of the gross family income as determined by the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) from time to time.

Such range now falls between P250,000 and P500,000.

Improved collection

Pag-Ibig EVP and deputy CEO Jaime Fabiaña cited improved collection efficiency as the reason Pag-Ibig is doing well financially, and thus able to make these announcements.

In a business meeting held recently, Fabiaña revealed before SHDA members during a recent business meeting that just up to November last year, cash collections from the loan portfolios surged to P13.3 billion, representing a 13.6 percent increase over collection for the same period in 2003.

This covers housing, multipurpose and wholesale loans.

"This is one reason Pag-Ibig was ranked as the 12th most profitable company in the country, according to the 2004 Business World's Top 1,000 Corporations," Fabiaña said.

Basic guidelines

He clarified that Pag-Ibig will again follow its basic guidelines on regional fund allocation, which will be anchored on the region's performance in previous years, and amount of funds generated based on membership in a specific area.

"This means of the P18.5 billion available for individual lenders, 54.96 percent will be allocated to the national capital region, 21.06 percent to Luzon, 11.13 percent to the Bicol and Visayas area, and the rest to Mindanao," Fabiaña revealed.

In the same way, developers will be provided with funding commitment lines 36 percent of which goes to the NCR, 18.3 percent to Luzon, 12.2 percent to Bicol and the Visayas, and 10.7 percent to Mindanao.

Fariaña informed that Pag-Ibig Fund now focuses on the administration of a nationwide provident fund for the government's housing program. It formulates other investment strategies relative to housing as well as improves its collection efficiency.

THE GALLERIA Vittorio Emanuele

World's oldest shopping mall

AMAZING STRUCTURES

BUILT between 1865 and 1877, the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele in Milan, Italy, is considered the world's oldest shopping mall by the Guinness World Records. It was designed by Giuseppe Mengoni in 1861 and named after the first king of Italy, King Victor Emmanuel II.

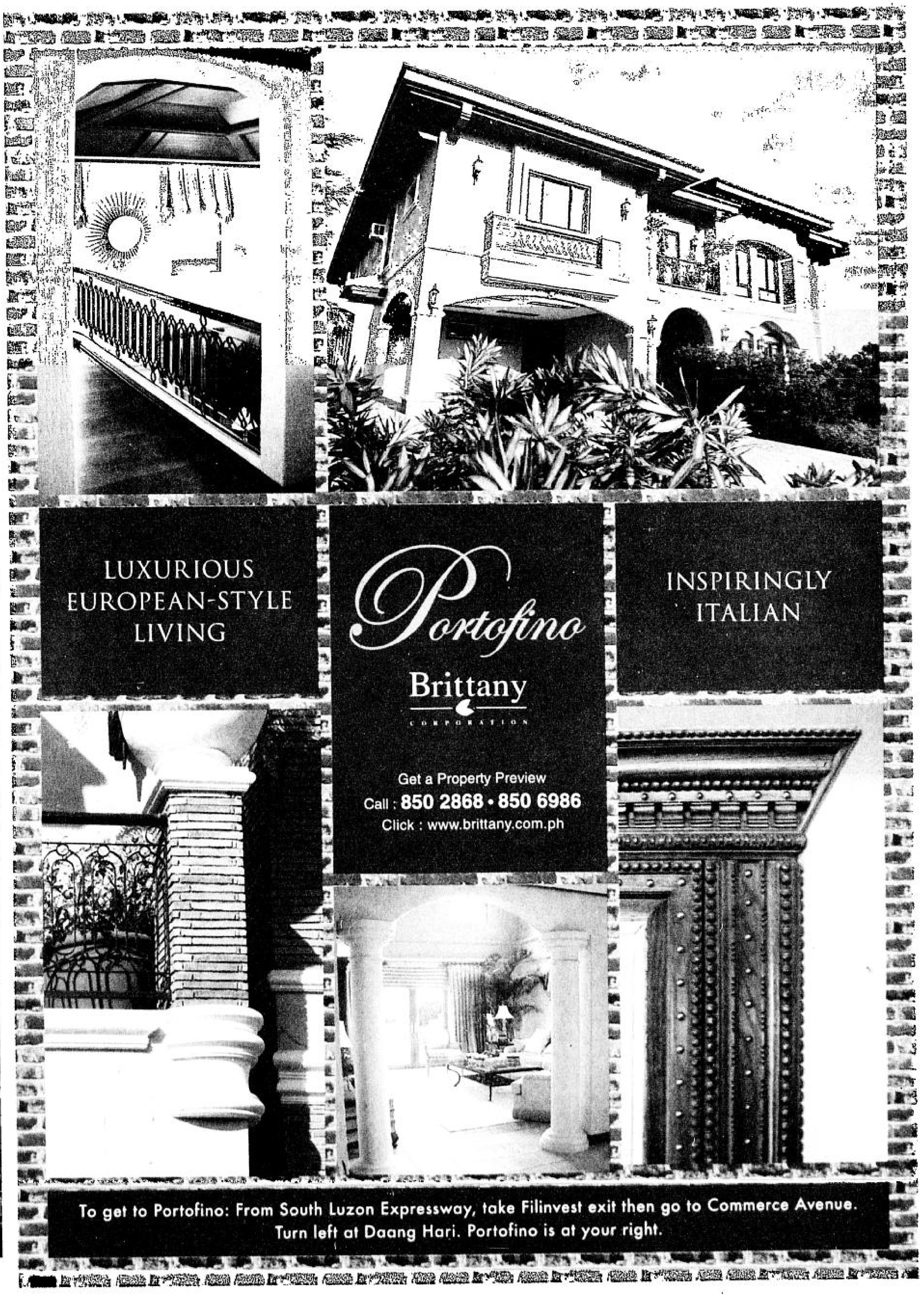
The more than a century old cross-shaped shopping arcade has a skylight for its roof which is made of arching glass and steel. The four-story Galleria Vittorio Emanuele houses high-end shops which sells clothes, book and record shops, cafés, restaurants and bars.

Inspired by London's Crystal Palace exhibition center, it has a neoclassical design. According to several websites, the mall is still the trendiest place to shop in Milan.

However, a most tragic incident happened just before the shopping arcade's inauguration. While inspecting decorative details at the glass dome, Giuseppe Mengoni, its architect, fell from the roof and died a few days before King Vittorio Emanuele led the opening ceremony.

Dianne M. Villafuerte

THE WORLD'S oldest mall is still the trendiest place to shop in Milan.



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A Chinese affair

INTO SPACE

Pinky Cruz

"OF ALL the cultures that have surpassed even western modernism, I must say, it is the Chinese that remains as enduring as the Great Wall itself."

Kung Hei Fat Choy!

On this very special occasion for the Chinese-speaking world, I deem it not only timely but also worthy to pay homage to one of the most enigmatic and enduring cultures the world has ever known.

Dragon's breath

From the imperial opulence that gave us the precious silk and china, to the graceful classicism of Ming influence, and the much celebrated chinoiserie, the influence and romance of this ancient culture have been with us ever since. Today, centuries later, it never ceases to baffle us.

And so, my interest is captured by one discovery after another, that China didn't only give me my favorite pansit and taho, or the lowly hopia in Ongpin, but throughout the ages, has been conquering all fields of human endeavor. Agriculture, shipping, astronomical observatories, decimal mathematics, paper money, umbrellas, chess game, wheelbarrow, multistage rockets, brandy and whiskey and much more—all originated from the Middle Kingdom.

Now, for some, Chinese is synonymous to herbal medicine and the introduction of paper which, by the way, were invented in 100 B.C. and 105 A.D., respectively. And the list goes on.

Painting the town 'red'

While it may be true that the Chinese had traveled far and wide bringing their heritage to share to humankind, it should not be overlooked that this race is not only firmly rooted in their traditions, but also the most willing to assimilate other cultures.

Why, there is Chinatown almost anywhere on earth, thriving in business and trade, and getting the best the western world has to offer.

The old as new

This cultural exchange runs even the gamut of architecture and design, having produced world-class Chinese architects like IM Pei, the genius behind the Louvre. In the furniture design, it can be argued that even the legendary Chippendale got the inspirations for his furniture from the graceful lines and opulence of Chinese woodworks.

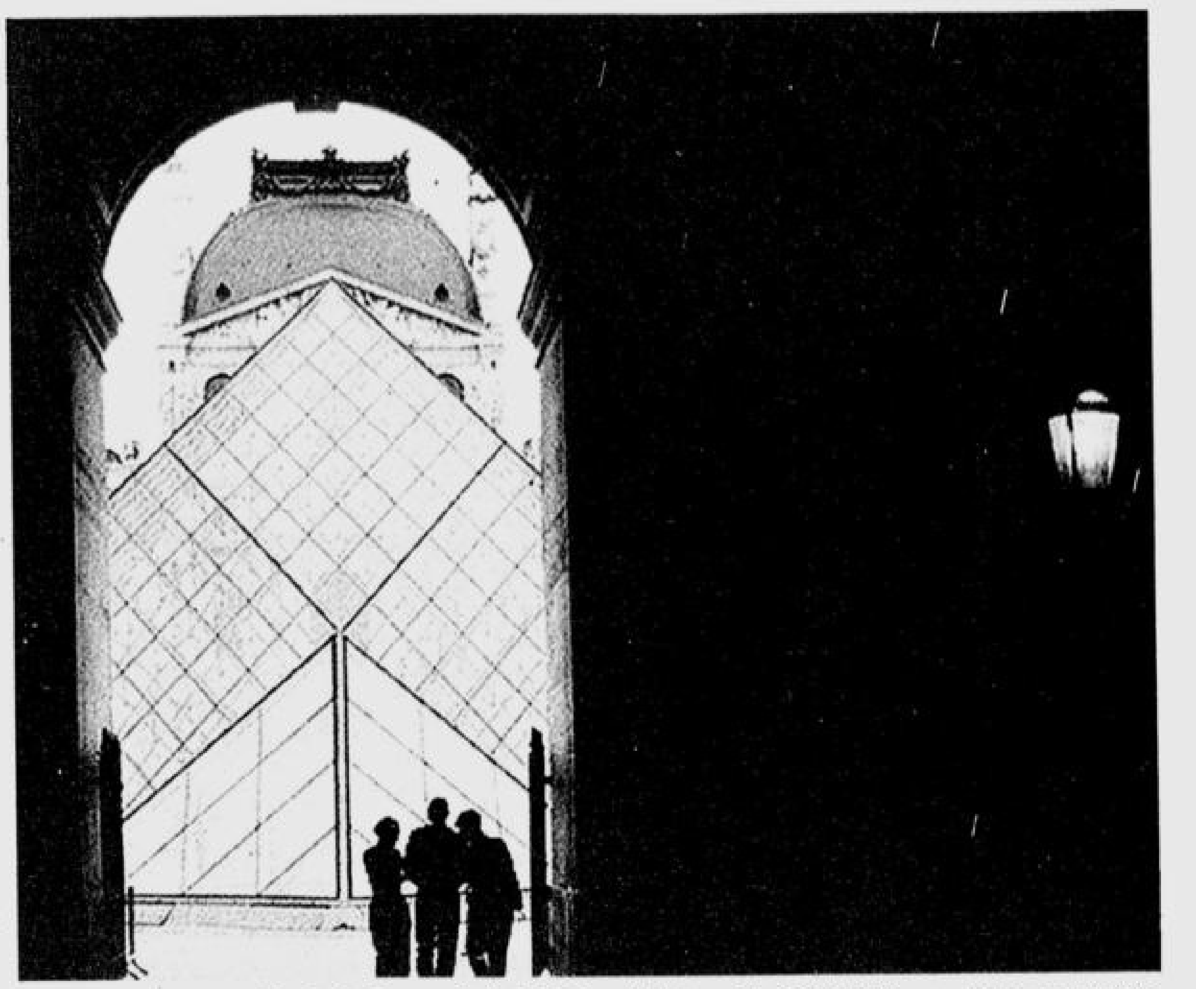
And the ebony lacquer finish is so chic nowadays, to think that it was in vogue centuries ago.

They say concept and space are the proposition of the west. But I dare say that the East, with the Chinese on the forefront, is fast gaining cultural and economic dominance.

So, to all of you Chinese out there, time for the grand "housecleaning" and "turning a new leaf." Happy New Year!

* * *

You may visit my website at creativepost.com.ph.



LE LOUVRE de Pyramide, Paris, France. Built in 1989 and designed By I.M. Pei, it is a world-class structure very much ahead of its time.

Ayala Land offers smaller residential communities

FOLLOWING the warm market reception of residential lots within smaller, distinct communities, property giant Ayala Land Inc. intends to develop the market for this category more fully in other locations.

Bolstered by the positive feedback of residential enclaves like Tamarind Cove within the established Ayala Alabang in Muntinlupa, the company is looking into developing more intimate neighborhoods for specific markets.

21-lot community

Tamarind Cove at Ayala Alabang for instance, is a 21-lot community with lot sizes from 470 to 775 square meters. While it is still part of the flagship development of Ayala Land in Muntinlupa, this last phase of the subdivision has a character all its own. It is laid out around a cul-de-sac and includes amenities like a series of gardens and a walkway through the neighborhood that doubles as a 400-meter jogging track. It is earmarked for growing families with an active lifestyle.

Ayala Land vice president Bobby Dy explains that the company is looking closely into these types of developments. "We realize that whatever their profile, a good number of homeowners seek to live in cozier communities that allow them to develop a relationship with their neighbors," he said.

At Tamarind Cove, lots are oriented to face one another to encourage interaction among neighbors. Moreover, the common areas which consist of a children's playground, an open lawn for active sports as well as tropical gardens, were intended to be centers where residents could catch up with one another.

Nevertheless, Dy points out that Ayala Land also balances the resident's desire for community with his wish to enjoy some privacy. Tamarind Cove lot cuts from 470 to 775 sq m afford lot owners plenty of room within their private abodes.

In other Ayala Land communities, the company has targeted other markets such as early nesters. Thus, in Kids Grove at Westgrove Heights, emphasis was placed on a large swimming pool with unique water amenities. "As we cover other locations within and accessible to Metro Manila, we will continue designing residential communities that meet the needs and aspirations of our customers and their families," Dy said.

According to the Ayala Land website at www.ayalaland.com.ph, a few lots remain available at Tamarind Cove. Its location within the bustling Ayala Alabang community has definitely pushed its sales, notes Dy.

Easily accessibility

The Ayala Alabang community includes the Alabang Town Center, the Madrigal Business Park, a number of schools, churches and major medical institutions. Various sports clubs and golf courses are also within the area. Moreover, it remains easily accessible to Metro Manila's business centers with travel time speeded up by the South Luzon Expressway.

Tamarind Cove lot buyers report that accessibility and the completeness of Ayala Alabang also factored in heavily in their decision to buy properties within the area. They expressed appreciation for the fact that aside from having their own amenities, they also have access to the basketball courts, multipurpose halls, swimming pool and tennis courts of other phases of Ayala Alabang.

For more details please call 848-5000 or log on to www.ayalaland.com.ph.

Cathay Land unveils South Forbes Golf City

LEADING realty developer Cathay Land recently unveiled to selected investors and the business community its biggest development project to date: the 250-hectare South Forbes Golf City in Sta. Rosa.

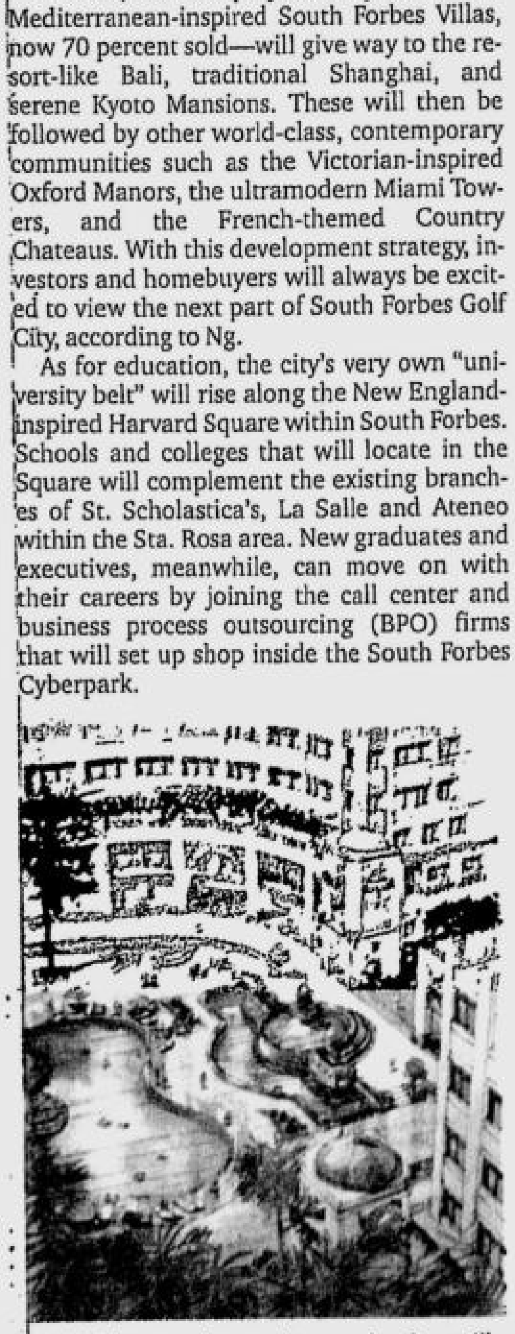
"South Forbes Golf City is the product of intensive research on the market's needs and a thorough collaboration with our masterplanners and architects," Cathay Land president Jeffrey Ng proudly announced.

New satellite city

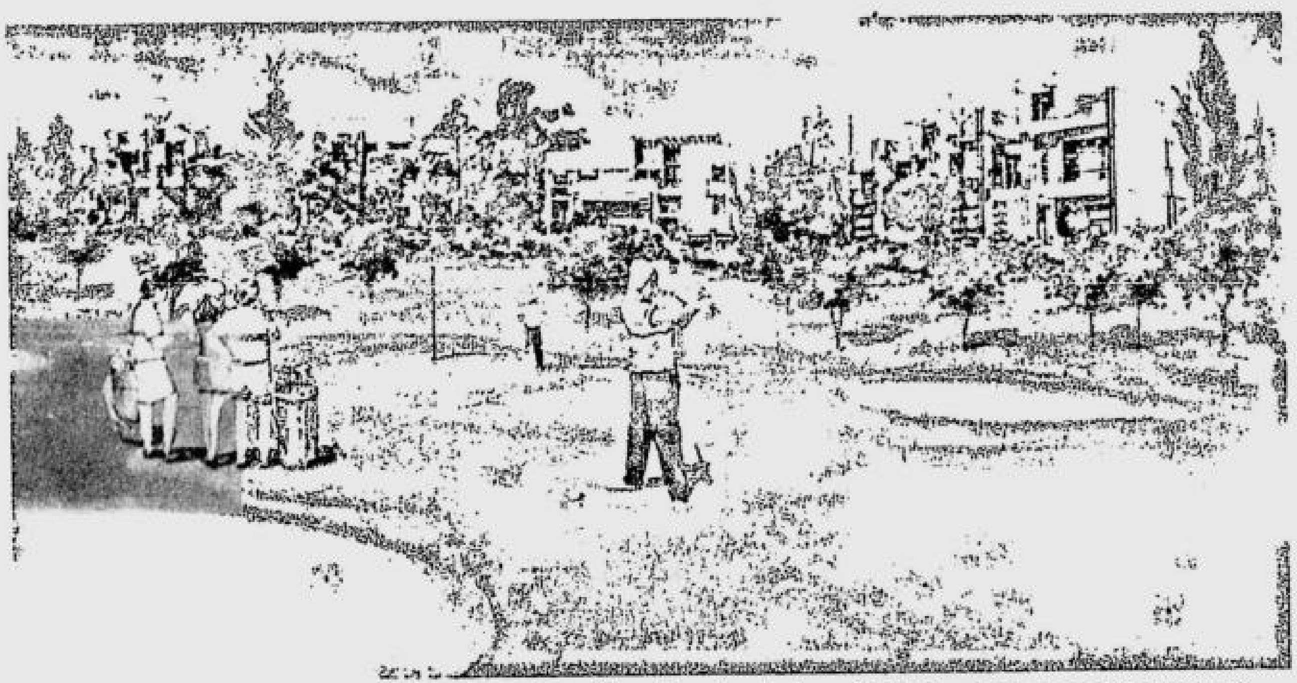
The new satellite city, as designed by masterplanner Palafox and Associates, perfectly combines residential communities, education, sports, dining and lifestyle options, and careers within the city premises. SC&A Architects then interpreted the masterplan and designed gated communities and amenities featuring a specified theme.

As such, the first project component—the Mediterranean-inspired South Forbes Villas, now 70 percent sold—will give way to the resort-like Bali, traditional Shanghai, and serene Kyoto Mansions. These will then be followed by other world-class, contemporary communities such as the Victorian-inspired Oxford Manors, the ultramodern Miami Towers, and the French-themed Country Chateaus. With this development strategy, investors and homebuyers will always be excited to view the next part of South Forbes Golf City, according to Ng.

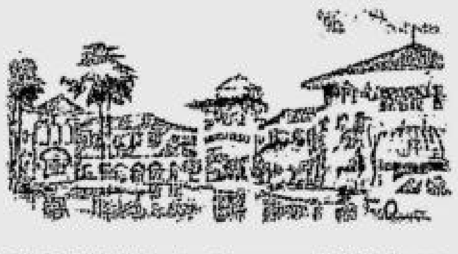
As for education, the city's very own "university belt" will rise along the New England-inspired Harvard Square within South Forbes. Schools and colleges that will locate in the Square will complement the existing branches of St. Scholastica's, La Salle and Ateneo within the Sta. Rosa area. New graduates and executives, meanwhile, can move on with their careers by joining the call center and business process outsourcing (BPO) firms that will set up shop inside the South Forbes Cyberpark.



YOUNG executives and true urbanites will surely embrace the convenient lifestyles on offer at the glitzy residential condominiums of the Miami Towers at South Forbes Golf City.



RESIDENTS at South Forbes Golf and Leisure Club will surely enjoy playing with their neighbors on a regular basis.

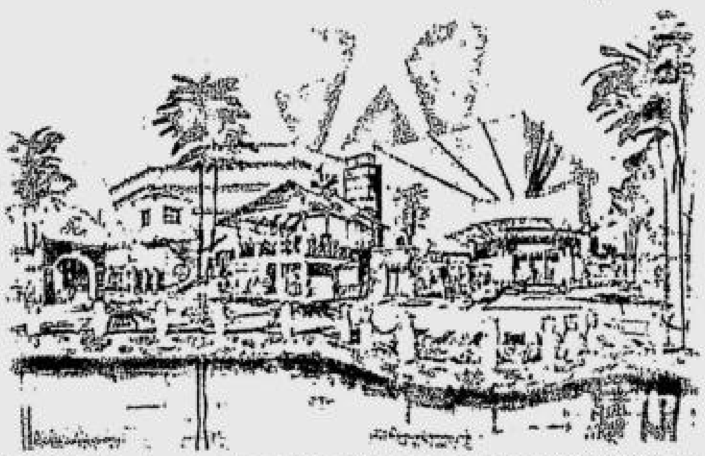


THE SOUTH Forbes Commercial Strip, as envisioned by SC&A Architects

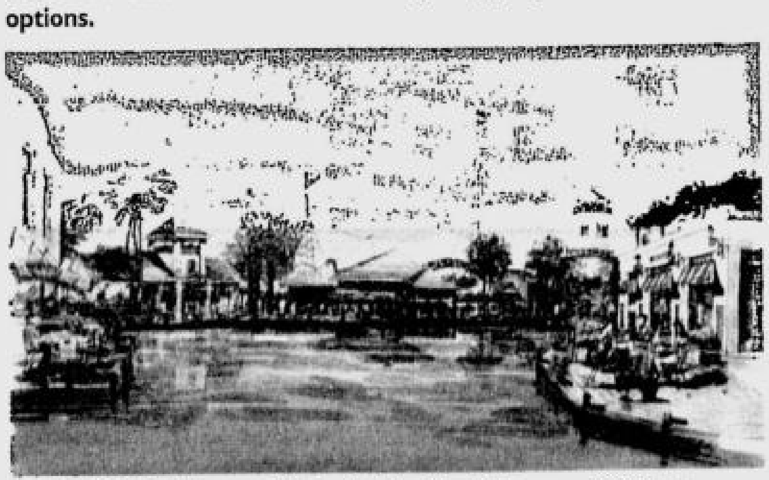
City strip

Right now, Cathay Land is carefully studying the zoning of the city's main avenue, South Boulevard. The city strip will host a myriad of lifestyle choices for South Forbes residents and offer exciting opportunities for business-minded individuals. Restaurants, coffee shops, convenience stores, banks, spa and wellness centers, gym, a mini-golf club, and driving range are just some of the conveniences that are just a short walk away for residents. Using the principles of New Urbanism, Palafox came up with a unique arcaded sidewalk concept that encompasses a large part of South Boulevard and promotes neighborhood interaction.

For the convenience of South Forbes residents, Cathay Land will develop a clubhouse and a number of strategically placed landscaped pocket parks with amenities for each community. Thus, residents can play basketball or badminton, or even go for a swim, within a five-minute walk from their homes. These plans also free the various clubhouses of congestion.



THE CITY Center has its various dining, shopping and entertainment options.



A RESTAURANT row will rise just beside Hole No. 9 of the South Forbes Golf and Leisure Club.

Golf course

The best sport on offer, however, is South Forbes' very own golf course. The 80-hectare South Forbes Golf and Leisure Club features perfectly manicured fairways and conspicuous water and sand formations that will test the skills of both seasoned and new golfers. Beside the golf clubhouse, Cathay Land will build the Astoria Plaza Sta. Rosa hotel to cater to the business and leisure needs of residents. Players and visitors can also enjoy the various dining choices on offer at the restaurant row that will rise beside a picturesque lagoon.

All of these details were carefully rendered and presented in the South Forbes Golf City masterplan for the better appreciation of investors. The company also prepared a unique advertising campaign featuring vignettes that promote the "golf lifestyle."

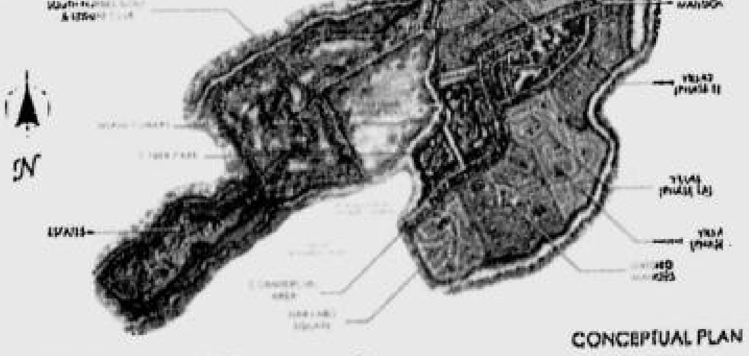
AMBASSADOR John K. Ng

"Golf is really the centerpiece, the major attraction of South Forbes Golf City. Our advertising strategy positions South Forbes in such a way that our messages instantly create awareness, recall and excitement among our target market. This fresh advertising approach has not only aroused the interest of many buyers, but has also intensified competition among real estate projects in Sta. Rosa," Ng underscored.

Completed projects

Among the completed projects of Cathay Land is the Astoria Plaza Suites in Ortigas, which features fully serviced apartments. Cathay Land is a member of the Cathay Group of Companies, to which leading steel maker Cathay Pacific Steel Corp. and Cathay Metal Corp., leading ceramic tile manufacturer Eurotiles, leading hardware store Federal Hardware, and top computer retail shop PC Express belong.

Investors and homeowners who want to know more about South Forbes Golf City may call (02) 635-8108.



SOUTH Forbes Golf City masterplan

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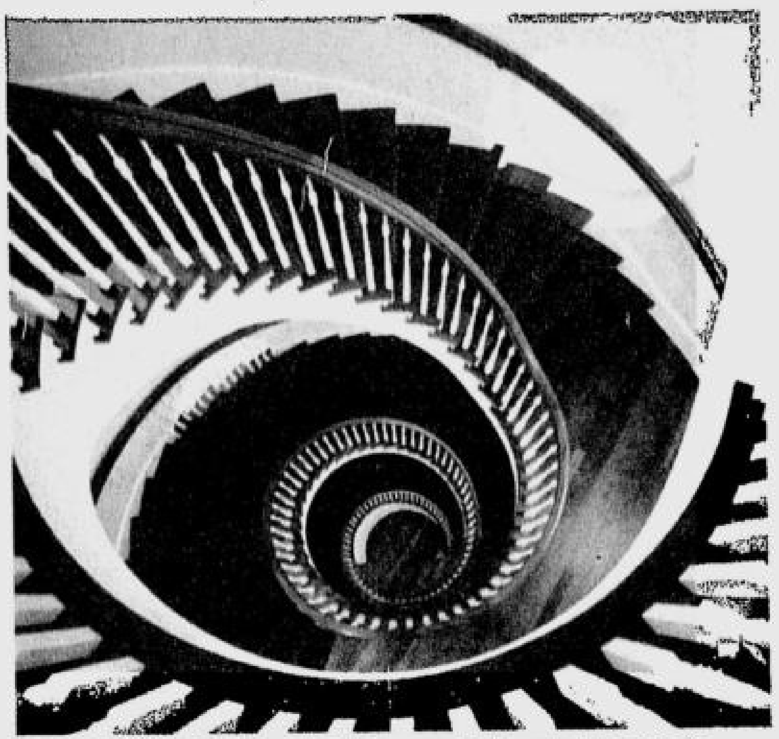
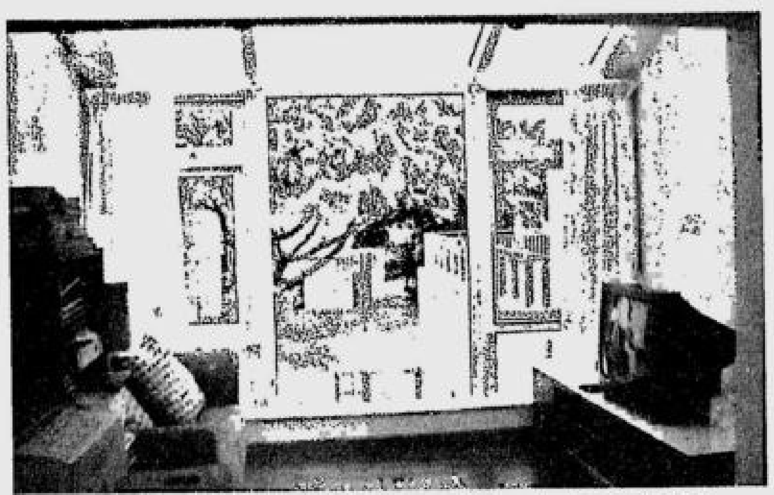
Spiral staircases, columns and skylights



HAVING a spiral staircase is discouraged in feng shui because it represents a downward spiral toward death for the Chinese.



A SKYLIGHT may be beneficial as long as it is not placed directly above a bed and strictly proportional to the room.

By Dianne M. Villafuerte

APART from sculptures, paintings, photographs and plants, feng shui practitioners take into consideration other common design elements which they believe can attract unfavorable chi (energy) if treated incorrectly.

As little kids, we might have found spiral staircases fun and exciting what with the dizzying feel it gives us as we climb up and go down it. However, Zaihong Shen, Chinese artist and feng shui practitioner, advises that it is best not to have spiral staircases to acquire good feng shui for the reason that, in China, spiral staircases symbolize a downward spiral toward death. Some feng shui consultants even see spiral stairways as the worst kind.

FENG SHUI

Where to put spiral stairways

It is especially inauspicious when a spiral staircase is located in the middle of the room because, in feng shui theory, "it creates a vortex which pulls a room's energy down into the death direction." In addition, a spiral staircase should be placed facing the main door of the house.

For cases that spiral stairways cannot be done without, Shen suggests to place it in a corner next to a wall to lessen its unfavorable effect on the room's energy. Placing wind-chimes at the top and at the bottom of the staircase can also be beneficial.

Blockers of positive chi

As with beams, columns are also seen as blockers of positive chi in feng shui and are believed to cause quarrels, headaches and insincerity among a house's occupants with the oppressive and hostile environment that it creates. Before you knock down that solid and smooth marble column inside your home, however, know that there are ways to alleviate the detrimental effects it may bring to your homelife.

[Besides, tearing down that column may even bring about more harmful effects, such as having a portion of your ceiling or second floor coming down on you.] Shen tells us that placing a plant or two in front of a column or near its sharp edges, hanging a soft sculpture from it or placing a bookcase or a mirror in front of or on it are enough to discourage its adverse effects.

Practitioners say that letting light and air in your home is considered advantageous and favorable in feng shui. And what can be better sources of light and air than windows and skylights? Skylights, however, should be strictly proportional to the room. A skylight that's too big for the room will make the room's energy open to outside forces. Skylights are also discouraged from being placed above a bed. It may cause discomfort to the sleeper since it may give the feeling of being exposed. To give homeowners a feeling of safety and security, it is best to use tempered and shatterproof glass for skylights. Shen also advises installing a curtain which can be drawn at times when you want some privacy.

PLACING a spiral stairway next to a wall counters its adverse effects.

Experience tranquil living with Crown Asia

CROWN Asia holds unwavering track record for developing secure and affordable homes, fulfilling the lifetime dreams of Filipino families for 10 years. Unearthing sites from North to South, Crown Asia creates these locations into carefully designed residential communities.

The keen understanding of each family's unique lifestyle, need and taste, inspired Crown Asia to create homes which reveal Italian influence. Countless families have chosen to come home to the lived-in communities of Crown Asia: Fortezza in Cabuyao, Laguna; Citta Italia in Imus, Cavite; and La Montagna, Mia Vitta and Maia Alta in Antipolo—five communities that embrace the natural contours of their surrounding.

5 values

In molding the ideal environment to raise families, Greens, the first of Crown Asia's five values is observed. Each community's thriving nature allows residents a plethora of space for fun and frolic. Unspoiled nature and flourishing landscaping provide activities that foster ties with family and friends to suit the surroundings of Crown Asia communities such as trekking, kite flying, picnicking, and biking.

At Crown Asia, breathing in fresh air becomes a regular treat for residents since nature is well preserved, providing an ambiance for relaxation, rejuvenation and leisure.

BREATHING in fresh air becomes a regular treat for residents since nature is well preserved (photo above). One of the attractive model homes is shown at right

Along with the significance of Greens, each of its community has more unprecedented values that are solely Crown Asia's:

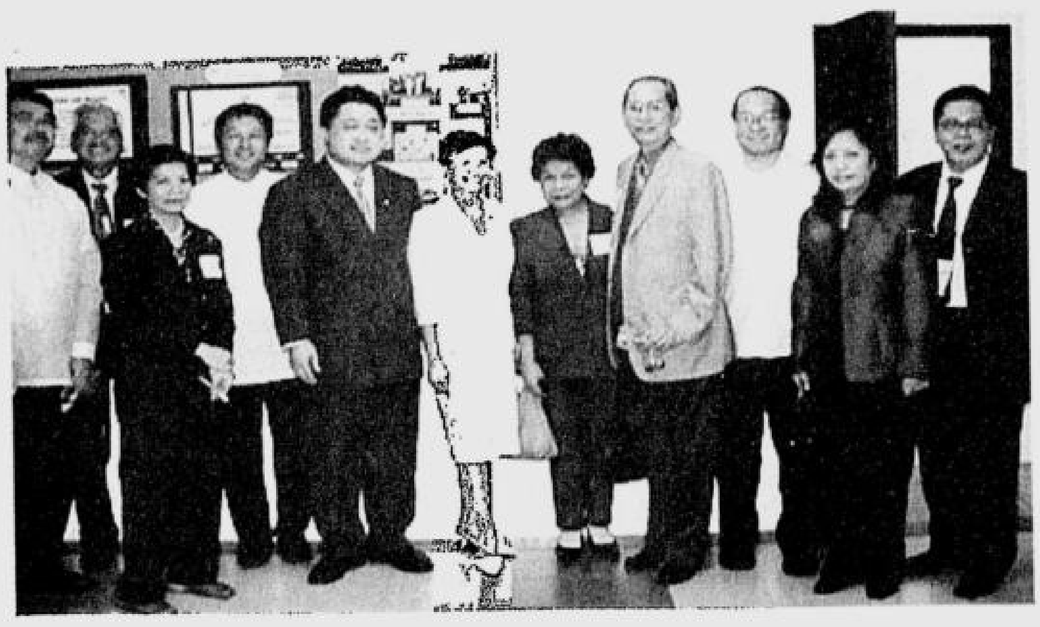
- **Security.** Utmost rejuvenation in your home comes with the knowledge that your family's safety is guaranteed. Communities are structured and manned to put each resident at ease within the comforts of his/her home.
- **Choices.** A variety of attractive model homes has been carefully designed to cater to unique needs and tastes. Intended residents are given the liberty to choose from a wide array of home and lot packages.
- **Serenity.** Experience the true sense of serenity in your home within a community of calm and quiet—surrounded by family, friendly neighbors and leisure facilities.
- **Attainability.** To have a comfortable home of ingenious design in a pleasant community and lifetime security is every family's dream. With Crown Asia's flexible and affordable property rates, families can live that dream today. The five crown jewels—its new model homes—are available from P1.9 to P3.8 million.

Other pluses

The communities also boast of first-rate sports and leisure amenities and facilities, providing more reasons not to have to leave the community.

Each community is secluded from the pollution and vexations of the metropolis, yet the convenience of coming home is heightened since the drive from the Makati and Ortigas areas is only 30 minutes.

Crown Asia creates ideal communities to raise families, create heartwarming memories, and where families live their lifelong dreams.



ARCDI INAUGURATION
Advance Research and Competency Development Institute (ARCDI) recently held the inauguration of its facility in Northgate Cyberzone, Filinvest Corporate City. It has been providing top-quality fundamentals training to engineers in electronics and semiconductors industry. Present during the inauguration are, from left, Science Usec Fortunato dela Peña (ARCDI Board), Francis Ferrer (Peza Board/EMS Consulting), Ieyo de Guzman (Filinvest Alabang Inc.), Arthur Tan (ARCDI Board/IMI), Trade Secretary Cesar Purisima, Science Secretary Estrella Alabastro, Director General Lilia de Lima (Peza/ARCDI Board), Cesar Quiason (ARCDI executive director), Michael Gotianum (Filinvest Alabang Inc.), Melba Cuyahon (Philips/ARCDI Board), Ernie Santiago (SEIPI/ARCDI Board).

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PROPERTY

Canyon Ranch introduces 'Street of Dreams'

MOST people dream of a beautiful and comfortable home of their own—a place that carves our place in the world... a home that becomes a legacy of our hard work and a testament to our success. A sanctuary that portrays the way we want to live.

Century Communities Corp. turns your dreams into reality with the introduction of "Street of Dreams"—an exclusive preview of its flagship development Canyon Ranch—a first-class gated residential community within San Lazaro Leisure Park in Carmona.

Exceptional homes

"Street of Dreams," which showcases a row of the exceptional homes at Canyon Ranch, allows visitors a foretaste of the beauty of the development and lets them experience the kind of life Canyon Ranch offers to its residents.

"It's everybody's testament to own a home for his family, and our loved ones deserved the best home we can provide," says Century Communities chief operations officer Marco Antonio.

Canyon Ranch is an exceptional development that combines all elements of a dream home—outstanding location, cool weather, inspiring architecture and house designs, spectacular project features and superior value. Not to mention that it is backed by a market leader with 18 years of property development experience and is offered in easy financing solutions.

Canyon Ranch is an exceptional development that combines all elements of a dream home

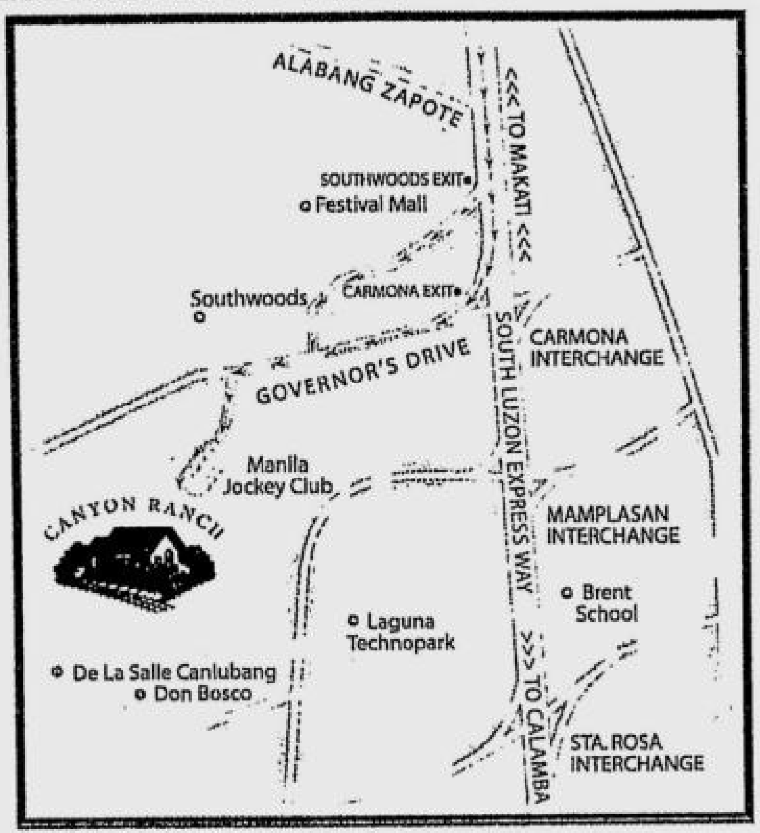
"Each time we let a guest into our home, we are ushering him into our private world and living in Canyon Ranch fulfills an everyday paradise," Antonio proudly says.

The minute you arrive at Canyon Ranch's Street of Dreams you will feel the project's distinctive charm and unmistakable character. It is extremely captivating to be welcomed by stunning California-inspired homes, fresh air, cool breeze, elevated terrain, tree-lined boulevards, lush flora and spectacular landscape festooned with natural stones and boulders.

Each of the home collection offers varying floor layouts and lot sizes and are individually decorated and designed to appeal to different tastes and accommodate different lifestyles. There are five attractive houses with three to five bedrooms ranging from 80 to 280 square meters. Prices start at only P2.9 million with as low as P8,800 monthly at 0 percent interest.

Ideal location

Barely 25 minutes and just four exits from Makati, Canyon Ranch is your refuge from the city yet is not far away. Easy access is through Carmona Exit along South Luzon Expressway or the Alabang Skyway.



LOCATION map of Canyon Ranch

Its ideal location offers tranquility and promotes good health while being within easy reach to life's modern conveniences. Nearby are shopping establishments namely Alabang Town Center, Festival Mall, SM South and Robinsons Mall. Also close by are schools like the De La Salle Canlubang, Woodrose and Brent International School. World-class golf courses within the area are the Manila Southwoods, Sta. Elena and the Canlubang Golf and Country Clubs.

Second home

Canyon Ranch is also a great second home as it is between Makati CBD and Tagaytay and other beach destinations in Batangas and Cavite.

The Canyon Ranch estate is considered among the most prestigious in the South as it is located within a leisure park. Its elevated terrain and rolling topography provides commanding views of Laguna de Bay and Antipolo as well as cool weather.

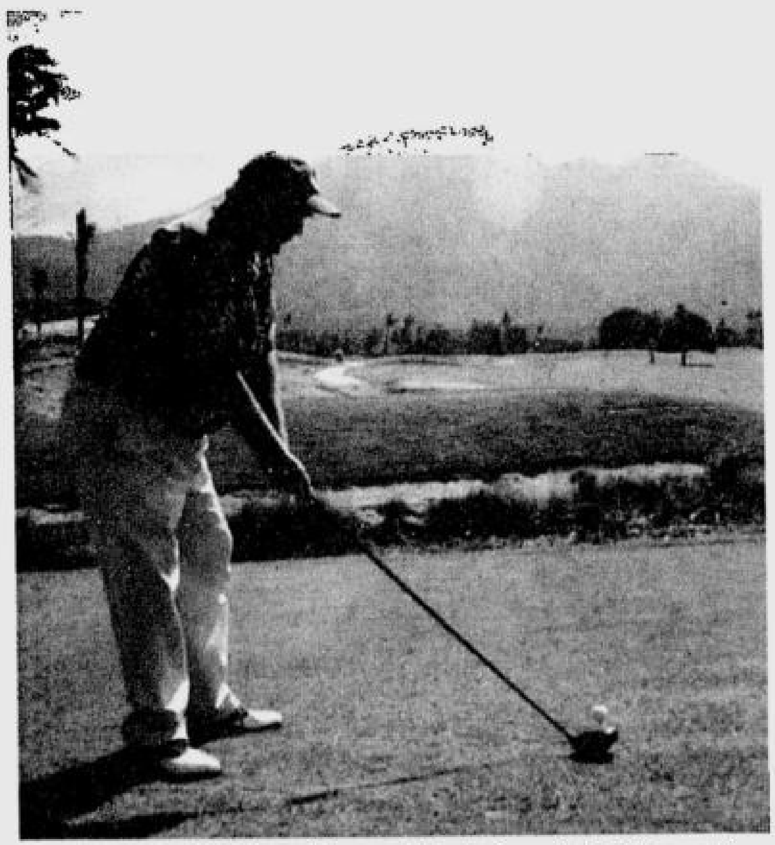
Superb facilities

Part of Canyon Ranch's well-integrated neighborhood includes a range of superb facilities such as clubhouse and village center.

The "Street of Dreams" tour includes shuttle service from Manila to site accompanied by an audio guide, a complete project presentation at the Visitor's Center, and a personalized orientation around the model estate.

"It's the ultimate Canyon Ranch experience, plus, we want our guests of the 'Street of Dreams' to feel the level of dedication and commitment we have for the project," says Antonio. Canyon Ranch custom-built model homes now for exclusive preview at the Carmona project site.

Ayala Greenfield Estates opens golf course to residents and guests



WORLD-RENOWNED architect and Ayala Greenfield Estates golf course designer Robert Trent Jones enjoys a good game, with breathtaking Mt. Makiling as his backdrop.

THE GOLFERS' search for an enjoyable and challenging all-weather course could be over as Ayala Greenfield Estates unveiled its much-anticipated golf course to residents and guests. The subdivision's one-of-a-kind attraction—its par 72, championship golf course—is playable starting Jan. 29 with its front nine holes and the complete course will be playable by July this year.

Providing a top-quality golf course and leisure club was the primary objective of the partnership between Ayala Land Inc., Greenfield Development Corp., celebrated golf course designer Robert Trent Jones Jr. and Heritage Golf.

Vital role

Ayala Land vice president Bobby Dy underscored the contributions of Heritage Golf in delivering a world-class course. "Heritage Golf's global experience in golf course construction and the hands-on approach of construction manager Greg Graham played a vital role in making this course such a great success," he explained.

Additional facilities of the Ayala Greenfield Estates Golf and Leisure Club are scheduled for completion within the next 12-18 months.

Facilities

Said Dy: "They will complement what we already have at the Village Clubhouse and at the Nature Park. There will be facilities for bowling, badminton and billiards; a spa and wellness center; casitas for overnight accommodation of guests; and swimming pools."

French hotelier Laurent Lamasuta was appointed as general manager of the Golf and Leisure Club.

Membership at the Ayala Greenfield Estates Golf & Leisure Club is exclusive to lot owners of the subdivision. From April to June, lot owners can activate their Golf & Leisure Club membership for only P50,000. From July onward, new fees will apply.

For further details on Ayala Greenfield Estates, please call 848-5000, log on to www.ayalaland.com.ph, or e-mail ayalasales@ayalaland.com.ph.

Vivant Flats tops off

VIVANT Flats, a 17-story residential tower located on Parkway Avenue, Filinvest Corporate City's premium condominium row, topped off at the close of 2004.

Characterized by open spaces and green environs, Vivant Flats offers the convenience of city living in a nature-inspired setting south of Metro Manila, says Filinvest Alabang Inc., the project manager and co-investor of Vivant Flats.

FAI is the commercial property subsidiary of Filinvest Development Corp. It spearheads the development of Filinvest Corporate City, a 244-hectare satellite city in Alabang, Muntinlupa City.

Vivant Flats offers the convenience of city living in a nature-inspired setting

Some VIPs

Some of the VIPs who joined Vivant Flats unit buyers at the ceremonies in December were TCGI president Virgilio A. Madrazo, C.E. Construction president Johnny Tan, architect Ted Narciso of GF & Partners Architects, FAI executive vice president Josephine G. Yap, Filinvest Land vice chair Andrew T. Gotianun Jr., Muntinlupa City Mayor Jaime R. Fresnedi and Vice Mayor Aldrin San Pedro, and Congressman Ruffy Biazon. Cocktails were served at The Continental of The Palms Country Club.

The upscale condominium allows residents to be near important leisure and business facilities: the Southpoint Driving Range; Festival Supermall; The Palms Country Club; the world-class Asian Hospital, which is just two blocks away; the Northgate Cyberzone, the only IT park in Southern Metro Manila; and Westgate Center, the newest commercial and entertainment block in Filinvest Corporate City. Westgate Center features the major retail anchor PriceSmart, Fitness First Health Club and other popular dining and lifestyle establishments like Café Adriatico, Koreana, Café Breton, Fitness First, Brothers Burger, Congo Grille, Chevrolet Alabang, Minerva Tyre Gallery, Poquito Mas, Lanai Red Lounge Bar and Go Nuts Donuts. Soon to open in Westgate are Intelligent Skin Care Clinic by Belo and the Westgate Alabang Home Depot.

Vivant Flats has 279 residential units composed of studios, one- and two-bedroom units, and 300 basement parking slots. Amenities include a function room with bar and pantry, a visitor's lounge, separate swimming pools for adults and kids, a jogging path with fitness area, an open courtyard with built-in seating, open areas for social functions, landscaped gardens with water features and two commercial spaces.

People behind project

The project's design consultant is the firm Wimberly Allison Tong & Goo. Over the course of the last half-century, WATG has become recognized as the world's leading design consultant for the hospitality, leisure, entertainment and residential industries. Having worked in 120 countries, its major completed projects include The Palace Tower at Caesar's Palace, Las Vegas; Disney's Grand Floridian Beach Resort in Orlando; The Ritz-Carlton, Laguna Niguel in California; Hyatt Regency Kauai in Hawaii; and Leonie Gardens & Condominiums, Indonesia.

GF & Partners Architects, the project's lead architectural consultant, renders architectural design services for office, commercial and residential condominiums, banks and financial institutions, hotels and country clubs. Among their high-profile projects are the PBCom Tower, Pacific Star Building, 6750 Ayala Ave. and the Makati Shangri-La Hotel.

Sta. Rosa Heights fuses old and new

STA. Rosa Heights, one of the most innovative energy-saving projects of Empire East Suntrust (Empire East Properties Inc.), recently kicked off its site development.

Situated on the Sta. Rosa-Tagaytay National Road, the 23-hectare Sta. Rosa Heights is set to change the face of the suburban landscape as a groundbreaking community that blends a Spanish-Mediterranean esthetic with the most modern of conveniences.

5 Spanish-style enclaves

The development showcases five Spanish-style enclaves called Villa del Santa Rosa (Phase 1), Andalucia del Santa Rosa (Phases 2 and 3), Sierra del Santa Rosa (Phase 4) and Jardin del Santa Rosa (Phase 5). All phases offer a choice of duplex and triplex homes—dubbed Bianca and Helina, respectively—as well as residential lots from 66 square meters and up.

Both Bianca and Helina feature a classic Spanish-Mediterranean theme with their red long-span roofs, decorative railings and arches. While the architectural styles date back to 1915, the homes abound in energy-saving and comfort features such as insulated roof and walls, an attic and a carport. Thoughtful conveniences include continuous water supply, an overhead electrical distribution system, a perimeter fence and a guarded entry point.

Play amenities

A full range of play amenities is provided for residents to enjoy. Vista del Santa Rosa, a 20,030-square-meter clubhouse, is near a lagoon-type swimming pool, basketball court, Zen garden and landscaped areas with cascading water and rock formations. Also provided are a children's playground, jogging lanes, 20-meter-wide avenues, a commercial center and village shops for each of the community's five phases.

Besides a family friendly master plan, the development boasts a superior location bordering the provinces of Laguna and Cavite, giving residents easy access to key destinations.

Convenient site

For those who do business within the vicinity, the Laguna Technopark, Carmelray Industrial Park and Light Industry and Science Park not to mention the manufacturing plants of Coca-Cola, Ford, Fujitsu, Honda and Procter and Gamble are nearby.

Meanwhile, the PNP Academy, Don Bosco School, Adventist University of the Philippines, St. Scholastica's College, Sta. Rosa Country Market, Paseo de Sta. Rosa Mall and the Manila Southwoods, Canlubang and Sta. Elena golf resorts are a short commute away.

From Sta. Rosa Heights, the Tagaytay boundary is only 10 minutes away, while Tagaytay Circle is only 18 minutes away. The South Luzon Expressway-Sta. Rosa Exit is only a 15-minute drive, and from this main thoroughfare, traveling to the offices in Makati takes only an hour.

Sta. Rosa Heights is an attractive investment for middle-income home buyers, with affordable terms as low as P4,700 a month.

Interested parties may call 867-8724, 867-8712 and 867-8532 for more information.

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Super! Countdown

9 [illegible]

Introducing Coke girl **Nikki Gil** page D1

Step into the **Super!** club page F1

Celebrity feng shui for the Year of the **Rooster** page H2

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Live Aid

THE MTV Asia Aid global benefit concert held last Thursday at the Impact Arena in Bangkok, Thailand, featured a host of artists from Asia and around the world, as more than 11,000 fans gathered to show their support for tsunami recovery efforts. Alicia Keys hosted the event, with the key message of the evening being to urge viewers to keep contributing to the relief and reconstruction efforts by supporting Unicef and other charities. Presenters included Vanness Wu (of F4), Chester Bennington (of Linkin Park), Sri Lankan cricket legend Aravinda de Silva and singer Alston Koch, Bollywood stars Fardeen Khan and Bipasha Basu, as well as Unicef's Executive Director, Carole Bellamy.

The event featured live performances from Asha Bhosle, Bird Thongchai McIntyre, Hoobastank, Good Charlotte, Jay Chou, Kelly Clarkson, Namie Amuro, Rain, Simple Plan, Siti Nurhaliza, Slank and Tata Young. The event also featured a specially-taped performance by Ronan Keating filmed in Phuket over this last weekend. Celebrities from around the world joined United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan in appearing in specially-taped messages of support—including 50 Cent, Ashanti, Black Eyed Peas, Bryan Adams, Enrique Iglesias, Franz Ferdinand, Jackie Chan, Jennifer Lopez, Joss Stone, Keane, Moby, Nelly, Ricky Martin, football star Rio Ferdinand, Robbie Williams, Shakira, Sting and Zhang Ziyi.

Viewers are urged to donate money through SMS, post or www.mtvasiaaid.com.

The evening began with Hoobastank, whose rendition of "The Reason" set the tempo for the concert. Kelly Clarkson of American Idol kept up the beat with "Since U Been Gone" from her album, "Breakaway." Thailand's international star Tata Young performed "I Believe" while Indonesian rock band Slank pumped adrenaline into the event with their hit, "Gara Gara Kamu." Korean pop superstar, Rain, enhanced the evening with "It's Raining."

Maryland-based US rockers Good Charlotte were next with their number "I Just Wanna Live." Siti Nurhaliza, the pop princess of Malaysia, enthralled the crowd with her song "Seindah Biasa," followed by Irish superstar Ronan Keating's straight-from-the-heart rendition of "I Hope You Dance," exclusively and specially recorded for the MTV Asia Aid concert from Kata Beach in Phuket a few days earlier!

Taiwanese pop singer Jay Chou showed the audience why he is rated as one of Asia's hottest stars with the number "Snail Song," followed by a medley of his hit songs. Indian diva Asha Bhosle's new version of the percussion-based song "Dhanno Ki Aankhon Mein" from the Bollywood film "Kitaab" had the crowd wanting more. The queen of Japanese pop, Namie Amuro, then regaled the audience with her hit song "Girl Talk," rendered in her sweet, powerful voice. Canadian punk-pop group, Simple Plan, took center stage with their song "Welcome to My Life," setting the scene for the grand finale where Thai superstar Bird Thongchai McIntyre bonded with the audience with his song "Som Dai."

And the winners are...

Favorite Artist-Mainland China	Sun Yue
Favorite Artist-Hong Kong	Joey Yung
Favorite Artist-India	Strings
Favorite Artist-Indonesia	Peterpan
Favorite Artist-Korea	Rain
Favorite Artist-Malaysia	Siti Nurhaliza
Favorite Artist-Philippines	Rivermaya
Favorite Artist-Singapore	Stefanie Sun
Favorite Artist-Taiwan	Jay Chou
Favorite Artist-Thailand	Silly Fools
Favorite Male Artist	Usher
Favorite Female Artist	Avril Lavigne
Favorite Pop Act	Simple Plan
Favorite Rock Act	Hoobastank
Favorite Video	Maroon 5
Favorite Breakthrough Artist	Ashlee Simpson
The Asian Film Award	"Kung Fu Hustle"
Style Award	Nigo (Bathing Ape)
Inspiration Award	All the people affected by the tsunami

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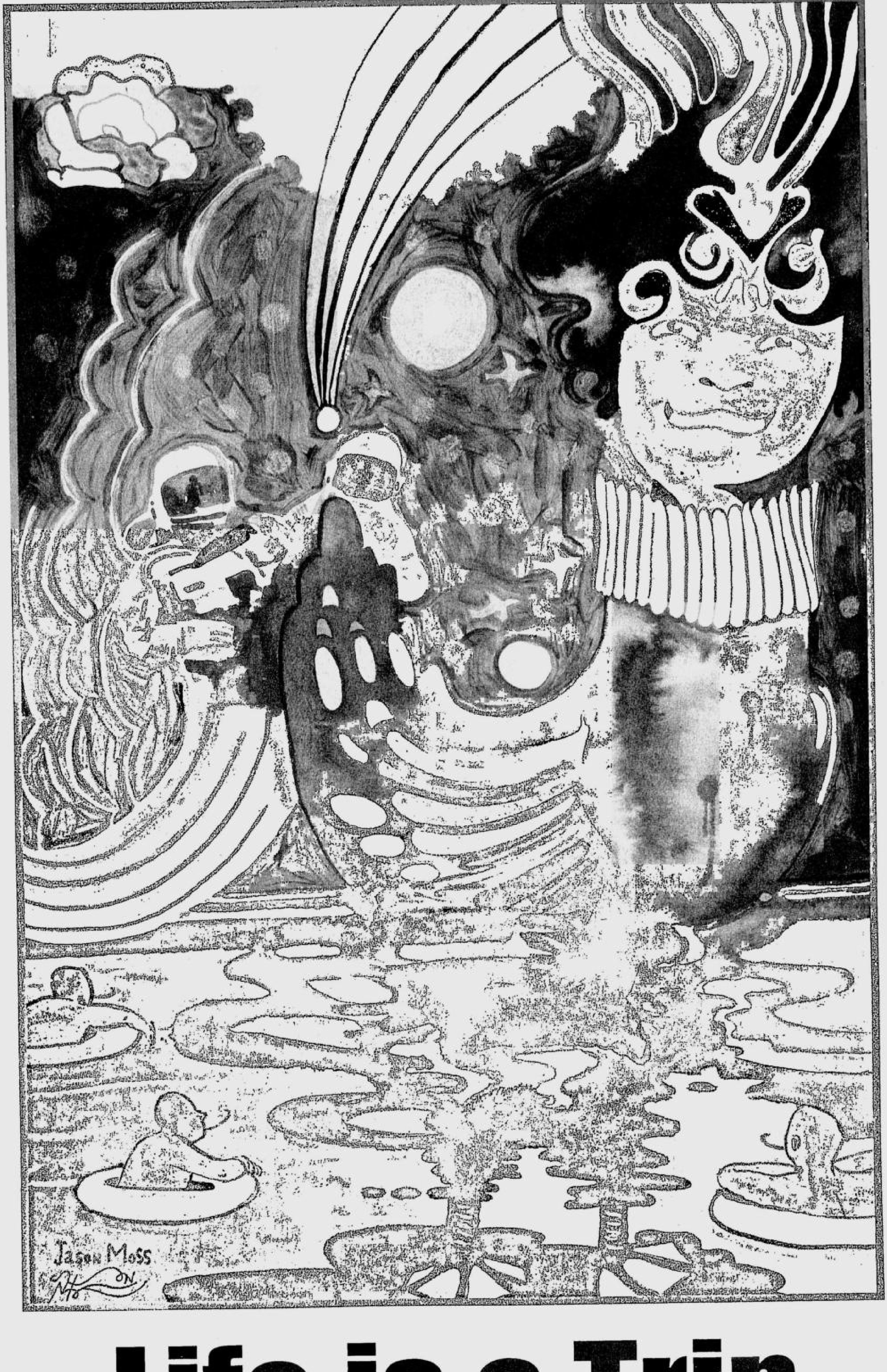


Life is a Trip

Text by Martin Valdes
Original artwork by Jason Moss

> *"Our battered suitcases were piled on the sidewalk again; we had longer ways to go. But no matter, the road is life."*
>
> –Jack Kerouac

IT CAN be inferred from the voluminous compendium of graduation-speech clichés and 3 a.m. barfly banter that, given sufficient sentiment or alcohol, man is a creature inclined to the abuse of metaphors. What astounding feats of anti-poetry we have achieved when attempting to express the substance between our waking and sleeping hours during moments of melancholy and intense passion, or after a round of tequila shots. "Trust is a rope that binds," "women are enigmas wrapped in mysteries" (or something equally Gordian and filet mignon-esque), "Life is a box of chocolates, you never know what you're going to get." Which means that Life's like unprotected sex. So always carry a rope that binds. Especially when you're unwrapping enigmas.

Anyway.

Chestnuts aside, a few of these metaphors are worth digesting, for their simple truth, if not their corny syllabic catchiness. For instance, Life is a Trip.

God bless the evolution of language, which has allowed a seemingly mundane word such as "trip" to mutate into a multilayered concept constructed of subtle nuances and generational connotations. Like anything of real beauty, the word still retains, at its core, its original definition; in this case, a journey.

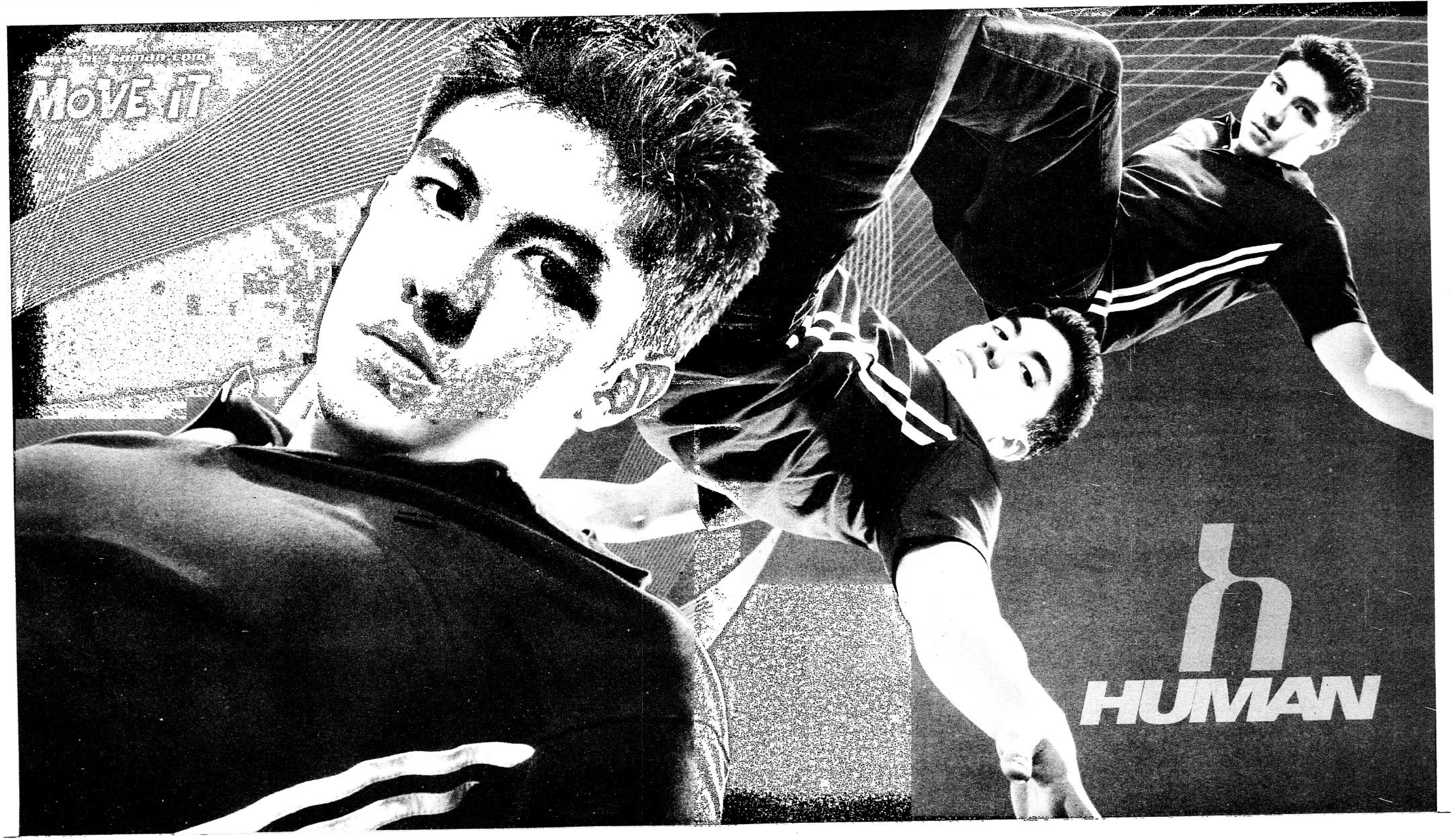
For a long time it slept, it hibernated, this Trip Van Winkle, with that innocent excursive description as its only designation. But this cub of a word has grown in both size and ferocity, nourished by the flesh of fresh experience and driven by the need to identify, to name these new instincts. Today, it is a different animal altogether. Thus, "trip" becomes not just a journey measured in the dimensions of duration and distance, but an adventure into experiential spaces. It can be as fleeting as a punch line or as interminable as a lifetime, a modern-day trip takes you to places no map has ever charted.

Trip as a journey to localities unvisited, such as Mactan and Palawan, both written about in this week's issue of Super! Trips as activities unexplored (Celebrity Feng Shui—what the hell?), social aspects unexamined (celebrities—what the hell?) or trends unexplained (the Lance Armstrong arm thong). The trip as an expedition into the dark side of society's moon—the substance trip, the narcotic waltz of prescription and designer drugs. Trip as an adjective to describe a sense of satisfaction at having been exposed, or witness to, a genuine moment of being alive.

It is worthwhile to note that the concept of the modern-day trip has been romanticized to a degree that appears to transcend traditional moral and ethical values, which are often portrayed as edifices of the past that have no place beside the architecture of the present. Too often we see acid-ingesting artists, children following the fad fifer, steroid jocks and silicon Jills—all in atheistic worship of The New Experience, consoling themselves that "whatever .doesn't kill you makes you stronger." At this point, the less hardy trippers discover the other archaic meaning of "trip," which means to stumble. And if you can't get up from a fall… well, let's just adhere to that old airline travel adage that the fare for round-trip is always better than one-way.

The nomads of today are not necessarily packing passports and traveler's checks. The only things required are an open mind, a spiritual seatbelt and the willingness to squeeze insight from even the most desiccated of fruit. These 21st-century wanderers know each other, recognizing the scent of transit on the other's aura as their own. Regardless of alignment or final destination, they are bound by the code of the road, drawn like moths toward the vague promise of a light that will never be adequately defined. Trying to trip the light fantastic.

> *"…the only people for me are the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn, like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars and in the middle you see the blue centerlight pop and everybody goes 'Awww!'"*
>
> –Jack Keruoac, On the Road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3 Ngayon, puwede ka nang mag-send phone-to-phone.

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2. Send to 2882 + <10-digit number of recipient> Ex. 1000 1234. Send to 2882917XXXXXXX. P1.00/send
3. Puwede ring mag-send ng 70-character text with your transaction. Type <amount> <M-PIN> <your message> and send. Ex. 500 1234 Anak, pakibigay 'to kay Ate, pambili ng merienda mo.

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Nikki in a bottle

Story on page D2

Winning caption: Pera o puri??
Sender: Milagros Carranza

Oh caption, my caption!

By Gino de la Paz and Tals Diaz

HEY SUPER! Fockers! Sorry we missed you last week, but we're here again. Yay! Moving on, didn't "Meet The Fockers" just leave you in stitches? (Okay, most people say "Meet The Parents" was much funnier, but the sequel is still up there in terms of crassness, eh? But for endless guffaws we highly recommend "Kung Fu Hustle." We like!) One person we're sure is also a barrel of laughs is Milagros Carranza. Just check out her winning caption above. Very existential, don't you think? Yay! Anyway, please get in touch with our Marketing Department at 897-8808 for your freebies.

Of course, our weekend—and yours as well—wouldn't be complete without us mentioning other completely Fockerized captions. Here are three that hit our collective G spot:

Caption: Don't you think we got it all wrong?
Sender: Bebot Cortes

Caption: Hmm, I think that's not the knot you got.
Sender: Michael P. Lim

Caption: Pressure okay, sir?
Sender: Anson Keh

Super!'s caption: Heal the world, make me a better face!

This week's challenge

YIKES. Looks like ol' Wacko Jacko is two decades late for the "Thriller" video shoot! Michael is ready to sing "not guilty" to 10 charges of committing lewd acts on a child under the age of 14. Yet the only other lewd thing we can think of at this moment is the King of Pop's plastic patchwork of his um..face. Wonder what his pet monkey Bubbles thinks when he checks out his man in the mirror? Better yet, what do *you* readers have to say about it? Just beat it! Our caption that is. E-mail us your entries at super@inquirer.com.ph and you could be the lucky winner of a goodie bag filled with surprises ... like a Michael Jackson CD!

Style Takes Wing in the Year of the Rooster.
Rustan's

DIGITAL ARTWORK BY NEIL GALANG

Nikki in a bottle

By David Milan
Photo by Steve Tirona

SANA'Y masabi sa awit kong ito. Lahat ng ninanais nitong puso ko. Sana saan man patungo sa buhay, may pag-ibig, may pag-asa, may saya at saysay."

You must be wondering about the girl in the new Coke commercial. Yes, the one walking around and singing while handing Coke bottles to different people on the street.

Enter Nikki Gil, the latest Coke girl who is currently making waves on our TV screens, the breath of fresh air between noontime shows and chinovelas. This 17-year-old Ateneo student graduated as a high school valedictorian, plays the piano and sings in her church's choir. Now we know where she got that angelic voice that has kept people captivated.

During our shoot, this humble girl told me that she was only Coke's second choice for the commercial. Apparently, the first model backed out because of legalities. Lucky Nikki. "I guess it was God's will that he gave me this project," she said. The commercial is about holding on to dreams and keeping hope alive, after all.

Super! decided to shoot her as a genie—a genie in a Coke bottle. During the shoot, she faced the camera with ease as Super! photographer Steve Tirona directed her

We were convinced—this girl is someone to watch out for. She's easy to work with, she has a fantastic personality and a cute smile that can win the coldest of hearts. It's no surprise that the big TV networks are already fighting over her. We even heard that Dolphy likes her. Now that's validation. We will definitely be seeing more of this girl in the future. And we're glad.

> **When I retire, I would like to be able to say to myself 'I am glad I did' rather than 'I wish I had'**

The thing about fame is that ...

It can be a blessing or a curse. If you don't know how to handle it, it can ruin you. When one becomes a public figure, people pretty much dictate how they want to view you. You can either regard these expectations constructively and improve on yourself, or allow it to destroy your confidence and self-acceptance of who you really are.

The thing I love most about what I do is ...

Most things I love to do revolve around music. I joined inter-school music competitions in high school, I am part of a church choir, I started doing commercials as a voice-over talent when I was eight. And now, I am very fortunate to get to sing the most "hopeful" song in the land in the latest Coke commercial.

People might be surprised to know that ...

Despite my love for humor, there is a serious prayerful side of me.

The most important thing I've ever learned is that ...

I try to focus on doing the best I can in every endeavor I undertake, knowing that the important thing is that I'm at peace with myself. Although, I also know that I can't please everyone. No matter how hard I try, it's just not possible. It'll just leave me frustrated.

I wish when I started off I've been told that ...

Not all my "so-called" friends would be happy for me during my winning moments.

The worst thing that ever happened to me was that ...

I had to go through the horrible phase of adolescence (mainly as a result of my over active oil glands, I had acne!) which seemed to have gone on for like forever.

And what this taught me was ...

That beauty can come and go but what's more important is the person inside.

The secret to happiness is ...

Forgetting the past and moving on toward your dream.

My best ever outfit consisted of a ...

Comfortable pair of jeans and a white wide neck t-shirt, and accessories.

My Super! Saturday night consists of ...

Youth church meeting followed by a night of dinner and a movie with family or friends.

The soundtrack to my life would include ...

The song "Because of You" by Keith Martin, which I dedicate to my God.

If I were invisible for a day, I would ...

Go to my Calculus teacher's house and hide his lesson plan.

The thing that makes me most angry is ...

When things start to go wrong, and I can't do anything about it.

If I were the most powerful person on earth ...

I would require everyone to follow the golden rule.

The best thing about my family is that ...

We enjoy each other's company. We can laugh at just about anything under the sun.

When I'm gone, they'll probably say ...

While viewing my casket, "She could use more lipstick!"

If money was no option ...

I'd try to encourage people to help one another and share whatever they can, like what the message is in the Coke commercial. It doesn't have to be highly expensive. It can be as simple as a warm smile; surely it can brighten up one's day—as simple as that can be contagious. Though if money was no option, I'd get rid of poverty in the Philippines and turn this country into a tourist destination!

When I retire, I would like ...

To be able to say to myself "I am glad I did" rather than "I wish I had."

The world would be a much better place if ...

We actually believe that it CAN be done. And this would take each person doing his share to make it happen.

My heroes are ...

My parents. They're never early, never late. They're always there when I need them.

The thing that makes life worth living is ...

Waking up every morning, knowing that everyday is an opportunity to make a difference in someone's life.

My greatest hope for the future is ...

That we will all realize that our only hope lies in knowing God.

The worst thing somebody said about me was ...

That I can't accept defeat.

My favorite moments are when ...

I win without stepping on others.

My most embarrassing moment was when ...

My crush saw me at the height of my worst skin break out.

I'm saving up for a ...

Trip to Europe with my family.

My biggest indulgence is ...

Acquiring the latest electronic gadgets.

My current state of mind is

That I'm sooo fortunate. After all, how many 17 year olds get the chance to be interviewed by Tim Yap? ;)

If someone would play me in my biopic it would be ...

Lea Salonga.

My five favorite words are

"Yes," "possible," "now," "why," and "eeew."

I aspire to be ...

A princess.

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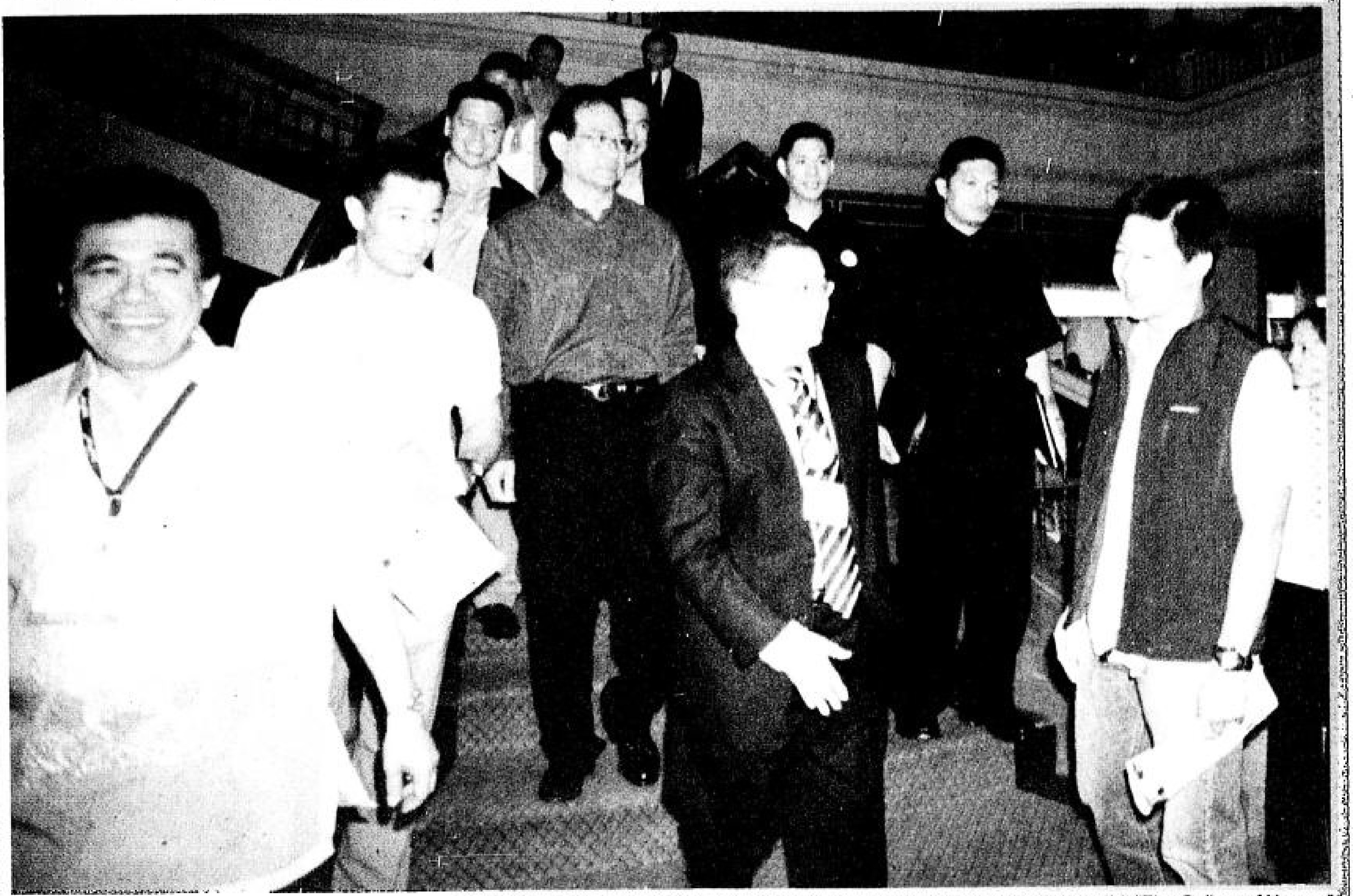


PLDT Chairman Manuel V. Pangilinan on the way down after viewing the exhibit "The Gallery of Heroes"

Manuel V. Pangilinan shares his thoughts with the media

SMART was at the recently concluded 3rd Filipino Networking Convention in Cebu's Waterfront Hotel which was attended by more than 1,000 delegates from all over the country, the U.S. and other parts of the world where Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) concentration is high.

This unique convention, where various Filipino overseas groups and organizations hold their individual annual meetings, is a major activity of The National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA) which is the largest Filipino community organization in the U.S. today with headquarters in Washington D.C. Founded in 1997 through the leadership of former Philippine News publisher/editor, Alex Esclamado (now Chairman Emeritus), NaFFAA is headed by Loida Nicolas-Lewis as National Chair. Loida is CEO of TLC Beatrice, one of the premier business enterprises in the U.S., with operations in Europe and Asia.

This year, the convention's main objective was to harness, through networking, the resources and potentials of OFWs, towards mutual assistance and support, and towards helping and uplifting the Philippines. In this connection, the theme of the convention is "Pinoy Power Worldwide".

"Gallery of Heroes"

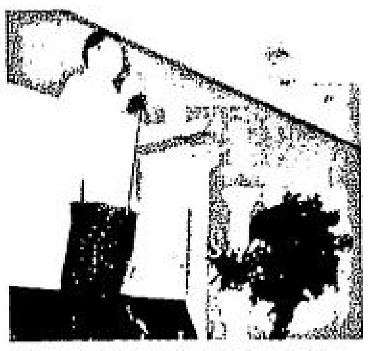
Manuel V. Pangilinan and GMA 7's Mike Enriquez

A delegate redeeming a SMART premium item at the registration area

Following a hearty breakfast sponsored by SMART at Waterfront's Celebes Room, the convention's opening ceremonies went underway. A massive choir, conducted by Ryan Cayabyab, sang "Ako Ay Pilipino" followed by a well-staged musical presentation depicting the Filipino diaspora. Afterwards, it was down to business as delegates proceeded to their respective conventions, only to gather again later on for the sponsored lunches and evening receptions and festivities.

SMART has always supported the OFW and last year launched 1528 SMART. Created for Hong Kong-based OFWs, the service, which is a 3-way partnership between SMART, PLDT Global and CSL Hong Kong, set a new standard in worldwide Filipino connectivity. 1528 SMART gives OFWs in Hong Kong lower rates when calling and texting back home. It also gives OFWs in Hong Kong access to their favorite SMART mobile services and content. The ultimate purpose of 1528 SMART, however, is to keep these hard-working modern day heroes in touch with their family and friends back home via voice, text and other value-added services and innovations, such as SMART Load, SMART PasaLoad and the first cash remittance through text service, SMART Padala. As SMART Chairman & CEO Manuel V. Pangilinan put it as he addressed the delegates on the final day of the convention: "Your remittances are now accepted to be a decisive factor for national development, not just a vital consumer economic driver. However, we should harness these remittances more productively. Our SMART Padala service is a step forward for cashless remittances, thus reducing cost and increasing the security of money transfers, and shortening the time elapsed for such transfers to occur."

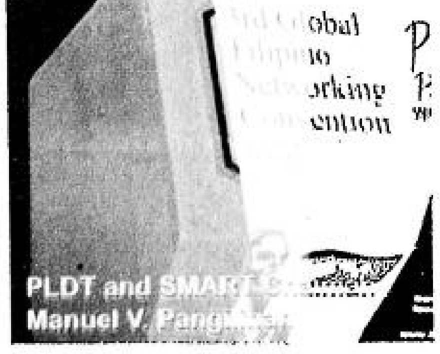
With the announcement that The 4th Global Filipino Networking Convention next year will take place in Hawaii, this year's successful convention closed with an impressive production featuring the chorale along with Filipino overseas performers, and with the delegates in the costumes of the countries and U.S. states they represented. There was however one thing the delegates shared in common despite the diversification of costumes—and that was each one proudly carried the flag of their beloved Pilipinas.



SMART's Marketing Head Ricky Isla presents details of the SMART-DOT tie-up

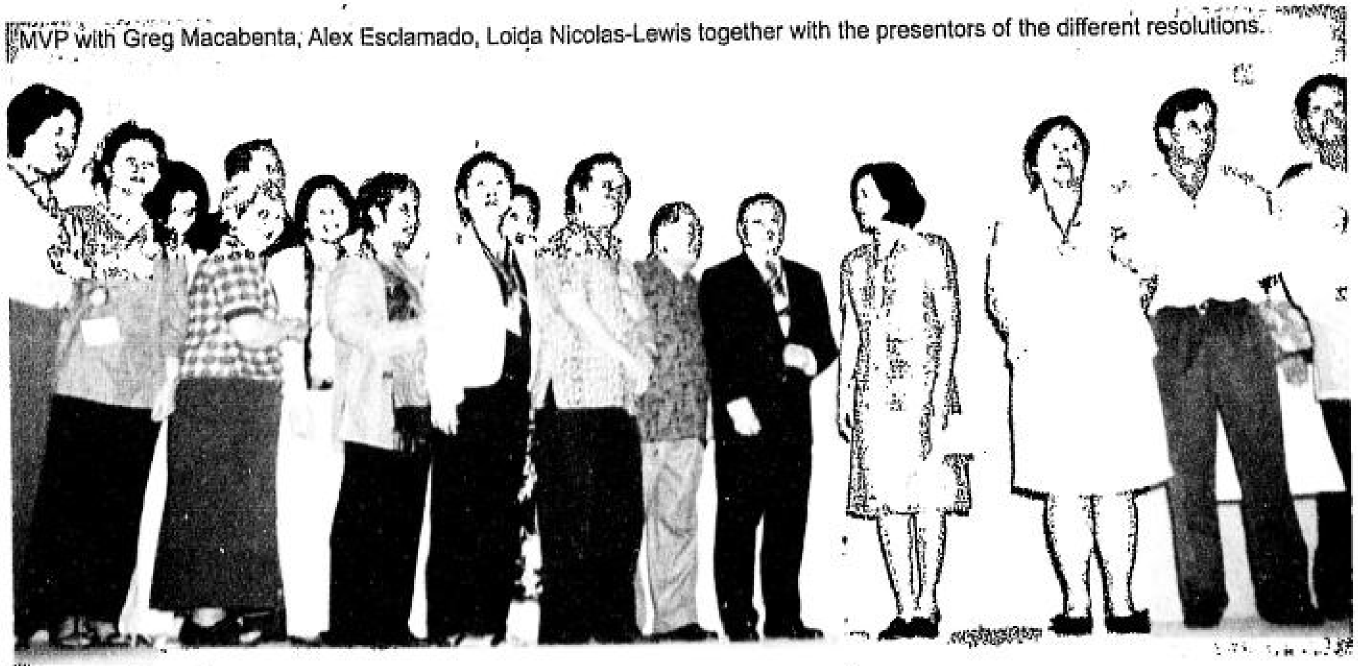
MVP with Mr. Alex Esclamado, Founding National Chair; National Federation of Filipino American Associations and Greg Macabenta, Vice Chair, NaFFAA; Operations Committee Chairman, 3rd Global Filipino Networking Convention

The crowd led by Macabenta and Lewis applauding MVP after watching SMART IDD's "Yakap ng Boses Mo"



PLDT and SMART [illegible]
Manuel V. Pang[illegible]

MVP with Greg Macabenta, Alex Esclamado, Loida Nicolas-Lewis together with the presentors of the different resolutions.



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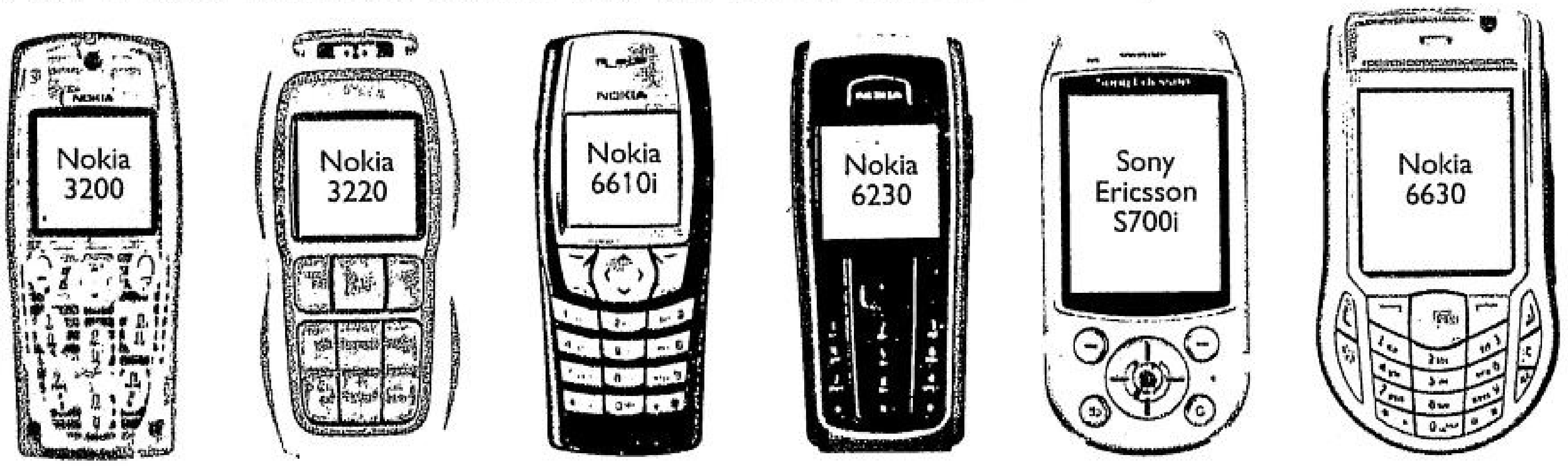

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Month Year

Credit Card Billing Address: ☐ Home ☐ Office ☐ Others:______________

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Over-the-counter Culture

The rise of the drugstore junkies

OUT THE WINDOW

Tals Diaz

> *"I am not addicted to Valium. I've been taking it for 17 years and I was never addicted to it."*
> –my deceased grand-aunt, bless her soul

CRISTINA* is an ecstasy snob. She's been to enough parties in her twentysomething lifespan to know that the hourly hug-a-thons among the pupil-dilated, serotonin set are just not her thing. Neither is "powdering her nose" behind locked public bathrooms, or nibbling on magic toadstools that would make her see orange-colored Smurfs walking by. She just says no to all the designer letters in the junkie alphabet: A, C, E, LSD, K and X. "I'm not druggie," she insists. Yet a peek into her little silk satchel lodged neatly inside her bag would tell otherwise. Along with her cell phone and favorite shade of lipstick, she can't leave home without her two *banigs* of Valiums, a bottle of Tylenol PMs and a little Ziplock bag of Ponstan painkillers. It was a habit she picked up from her pill-popping mother (likewise "not a junkie"). Thus, Cristina feels absolved of the stigma that the rest of the city's "high" society bears.

Welcome to Manila's over-the-counter culture. It's an alternate universe away from the clandestine world of shady, nameless dealers and straight-to-rehab candidates. Yet is the growing self-medication movement really the safer alternative?

Designer vs. *Ukay-Ukay*

In a city where the once-innocent question of "wanna party?" has long since adopted a whole other meaning, which is to imbibe illegal substances to heighten pleasure levels, the weekend distribution of such "party favors" is not exactly a new thing, nor is it breaking news. Most big cities with any hiss of a nightlife are peopled with recreational users who, despite all warnings and drug awareness classes since grade school, are all too willing to take partying to a higher level. The designer drugs of choice among the party hard set? According to surveyed owners 'of popular bar and club owners in the Makati and Malate districts, the blue chip investments of mainstay nightlifers are series C and E: Cocaine and Ecstasy.

Let's step into a time machine and review some historical tidbits, shall we? Cocaine, a.k.a. "blow" and "snow" had its early start before the 1920s, when jazz and blues musicians joined traveling medicine shows that sold coke-laced potions. In 1922, Aleister Crowley's "Diary of a Drug Fiend" influenced bands like Led Zeppelin and Killing Joke. Un-

OVER-THE-COUNTER/ E2

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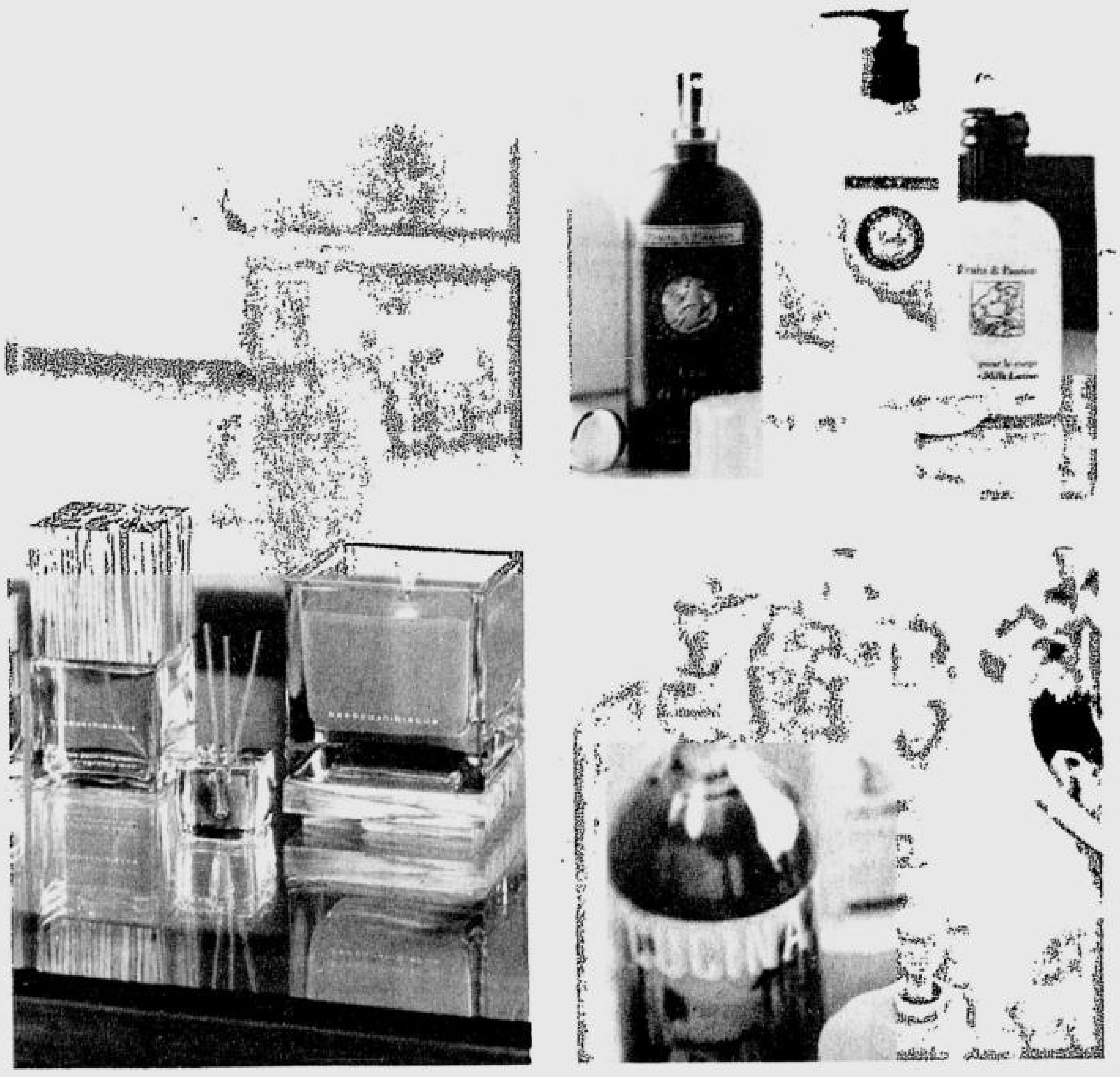

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The charity wrist

"Yellow wakes me up in the morning. Yellow gets me on the bike everyday.
Yellow has taught me the true meaning of sacrifice. Yellow makes me suffer.
Yellow is the reason I'm here."
–Lance Armstrong, on the color of his Live Strong wristband
"They call me mellow yellow. Quite rightly."
–Homer Simpson, on his skin color

Age against the machine

Gino de la Paz

COMPASSION is intense, people, and most of the time it can rake in millions upon millions of dollars.

Take it from the Lance Armstrong Foundation. Established by the cyclist in 1997 when he was diagnosed with testicular cancer, the charity originally set out to raise $5 million for cancer research by hawking a yellow wristband inscribed with the words "LIVE STRONG." That was in August 2004. Now, it looks like the foundation has already reaped triple that amount, $15 million plus change. That's a ton of green and a ton of yellow bracelets.

The 'anti-Kabbalah' bracelet

As last summer's hottest fashion accessory, the $1 Live Strong wristband eclipsed the much-hyped $20 red string Kabbalah bracelet worn by the likes of Madonna and Britney Spears. (Take that, Steven Cojocaru.) With Angelina Jolie, Gwyneth Paltrow, John Kerry and Bono donning it at one point, the patronage shift was due largely to the message.

"Young people with cancer should be empowered to fight hard, dream big and live strong," Armstrong said when the bands were launched. Through the bright jelly tokens, he also wanted to show that cancer is not a disease only for the elderly. Armstrong's popularity in America ensured the success of the campaign and stamped the color yellow down as a symbol of his determination to increase awareness about the Big C.

Apparently, the Live Strong campaign also went beyond wristbands. One-off garments and accessories made by some of the world's top fashion designers were auctioned off in July last year. Featured items included an Oscar de la Renta dress and clutch bag worth $15,000 as well as a Louis Vuitton custom-made Epi hatbox and an 18-carat gold bracelet worth $7,000. There was also a pair of thigh-high suede banana boots donated by Manolo Blahnik. As Coldplay would have sung, "And they were all yellow."

With a waiting period of three to four weeks for orders, the Live Strong wristband was, and continues to be, a runaway hit. This success story, unfortunately, has spawned an army of copycats, ushering in the newest way to support your favorite charity. (Or another way to look like you do, wink wink.) In related news, my black heart skipped a beat. What's next in this battle of the wristbands?

Please hold, Gullibility is on line 2

The stuff of nightmares, it seems that all previously modest nonprofit organizations have taken the bandwagon route to mogulhood by issuing their own symbols of your philanthropy. But that's just my libelous guess. Then again, a quick, painless and thoroughly unreliable Google search reveals that yes—indeed—there's more to this trendier-than-thou, er, trend than those (damn) Live Strong wristbands.

For instance, a gray wristband shows you're against brain cancer. A teal wristband shows you're against cervical cancer. A pink wristband shows you're against breast cancer (or you're for Paris Hilton, your pick). A yellow wristband shows you're against all types of cancer (and saves you from forking over a dollar each for the gray, teal and pink ones. Unless you really like Paris Hilton, in which case you'll buy a box of 1,200 pink wristbands).

A blue wristband shows you're pro-life (or anti-death, depending if you see the glass as half-full or… you get it). An orange wristband shows you're against AIDS. A black-and-white wristband shows you're against racism. A camouflage-green wristband says you support the American troops in Iraq. A white wristband shows you're against poverty in Africa. A white wristband also shows you're against tsunamis. Blabbity blah blah.

I clown you not, especially about the last one. Rather than devoting one's energy to deciphering these bands, wouldn't it be a lot more effective to wear an old-fashioned slogan T-shirt? You'll only annoy the public once, or whenever you choose to do your laundry. And since we're on the subject, wouldn't it be more normal for young people to just think of casual sex instead of accessories? Again, that's just me but really, what does this imply about those who *don't* give a rat's ass about these charity wristbands? Could it mean that cancer, poverty in Sudan, AIDS, global warming, earthquakes, al-Qaida, PMS, advanced calculus, carbohydrates, beached whale sharks and Kris Aquino are all causes that we non-wristband wearers are secretly *for*?

Band aid

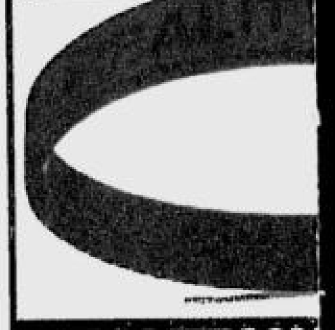
I know it's in bad taste to make light of very, very sad situations but look, I think I already did. Oops. Moving on, while the more sensible of you look for a moment's peace away from those pesky do-gooders and sensitive types, I have created seven charity wristbands for your enjoyment and subsequent non-use.

By strapping on one of these make-believe bracelets, you can show the world just how much you care about things that really don't matter. (Proceeds won't go to Unicef or the Red Cross. At least I'm honest, unlike the government.) Wear them all together and you will prove that, seriously, you need to get your own life—or end it—very soon. As Lance Armstrong would never, ever say, "Live wrong!"

I HEART GOLD

Price: A sudden fascination with Scrooge McDuck

Proceeds go to Anna Nicole Smith (married prehistoric oil tycoon J. Howard Marshall seconds before he kicked the bucket) and Rose Porteous (Pinay housekeeper-turned-one of Australia's richest women). On that note, the International League of Hot Gold Diggers would also like to donate the profits—and award its highest honors—to Kimora Lee Simmons (ex-"supermodel," now Baby Phat "creative director") and Slovenian fox Melania Knauss (alleged "supermodel," now wife of Donald Trump) for their outstanding displays of "true love" and "affection." If you're an aspiring hooker with both a passport and a heart of gold (or platinum), sport this wristband to help out some of the most conniving beeyatches who graced the face of Planet Earth during their impending time of need (e.g., next week's Cristal shortage).



REALITY SU

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Over-the-counter Culture

From page E1

doubtedly, cocaine experienced a high during the Disco Era, centralized at New York's infamous Studio 54, where an image of the man on the moon with a coke spoon to his nose hung over the dance floor.

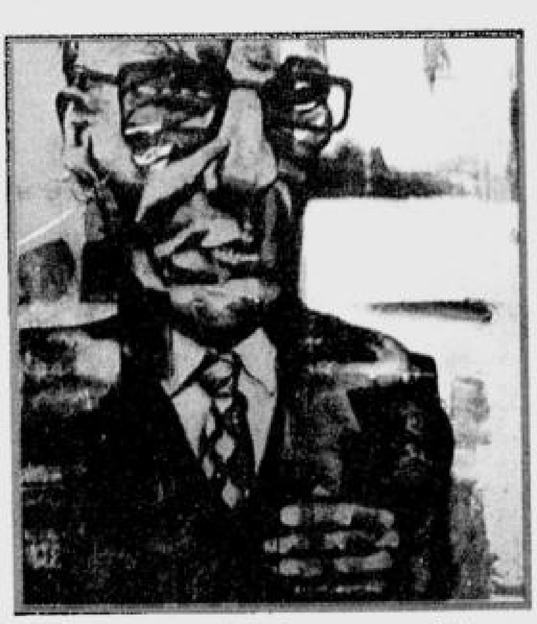
Ecstasy, or MDMA and nicknamed simply "e" or "X," was first patented on Christmas Eve in 1914 by the German pharmaceutical company Merck. It was relatively unknown until the 1960s, when the drug was used by psychiatrists in their therapy sessions to treat multiple-personality disorders and aid troubled married couples. The bliss-inducing properties of e eventually found its way from the clinics to the raves, thanks to certain hedonists who had done their homework.

Such designer drugs don't come cheap: Locally, the going price for a hit of ecstasy ranges from P1,000 to P1,200, while a gram of coke from your um… friendly neighborhood dealer these days will set you back a whopping P4,000 to P5,000.

Compare these designer price tags to their *ukay-ukay* evil twins. A *banig* of Valiums costs between P80 to P200. The analgesic Mogadon, or "mogs," which was popular in the '70s, is making a big comeback in the partying circuit, and average P800 for a pack of 10. For a couple of hundred pesos, painkillers such as Celebrex and Ponstan come cheaper by the dozen. And for anyone in touch with a *balikbayan* flying in from the States, sleeping aids such as Tylenol PMs cost about as much as a family-sized pizza. With the obvious markdown and relative accessibility of such prescription drugs, it's not hard to see why these alternatives are fast becoming a staple in the nocturnal diets of the young party crew. Sometimes, one need not even venture out to the local pharmacy with a stolen prescription on hand. Scouring the good ol' medicine cabinet would be enough to unearth some too-legit-to-be-true treasures.

To 'V' or not to 'V'

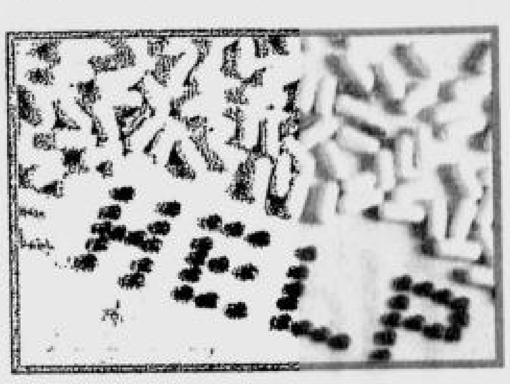
If ecstasy and cocaine are considered the "It" drugs, then Valiums or "Vs" are the Anti-It drug of choice. According to 24-year-old Rina, a self-confessed "V-girl," she pops the blue pill "every time the need arises," citing big fights with her boyfriend as a primary cause. "I take just one to tide me over or when I'd rather be apathetic to the problems in my little world," she adds. Mario, a college student and yet another certified Valium disciple, spends his weekends popping two Vs and watching TV. Bert, a young pastry chef at a popular restaurant chain, even suggests "crushing it and snorting the powder for a faster effect." Bar trawlers Jane, Eduardo and Jon have discovered yet another characteristic of Valium apart from its anti-anxiety properties. To boost their night out in the town, they mix it with alcohol. "I take 10 mg with my rum coke," says Eduardo without even blinking in shame. He claims that the combo is enough to give him that floaty feeling without the heavy-lidded, mush-ado-about nothing hit of ecstasy.



CHEMICAL BROTHER. Beat movement icon William S. Burroughs

COKE CLASSIC. Led Zeppelin hits a high note

In 2003, anti-anxiety drugs such as Valium and its ilk were raised to an S2 level, meaning that only doctors with a yellow pad prescription are authorized to prescribe these medications. Even with this yellow pad, one can only purchase a maximum of 30 Valiums at a time. Yet resourceful ruffians always find a way around such edicts. In Manila's six-degrees-of-separation society, one will always know a friend who knows a friend who can get a hold of these prescriptions to procure pills for a captured market.



Drugstore *koboys*

And how about the stuff that you *can* buy sans a prescription at your local pharmacy? That so-called "floaty feeling" can also be mimicked with painkillers. Ponstan and Celebrex are easy fix-its for body aches and menstrual pains, but an alarming number of young women pop them like candy at any sign of discomfort. "I take them when I'm sleepless or in pain, even if it's a tolerable pain. I'd rather self-medicate than see a doctor," admits Kristal, who has never—and claims that she never will—take e, coke, acid and their illegal variants in her life. Yet she admits to having one day gone to a drugstore with a friend to see what over-the-counter goodies would go well with alcohol, citing Alaxan and Robitussin as worthy chasers. She has no qualms about her penchant for anything prescription either; even going as far as printing for herself a T-shirt that proclaims, "Pfizer made me." Perhaps she should peddle her creation to the likes of Winona Ryder, Matthew Perry and Michael Jackson, who have confessed to being addicted to painkillers.

Illegal matters

Undoubtedly, there is a flippant, even perversely casual attitude toward self-medication habits and over-the-counter drug abuse. Many young people view these branded, packaged drugs as perfectly "legal." But there's the rub. There is a general misconception about what's considered "legal" and "illegal." It's legal only if the drug is specifically prescribed by a doctor. It's prohibited when they're used for any other purpose without a valid prescription. As such, "abuse" is defined when a medical substance is used outside its intended purpose.

Most illegal substances, in fact, were first developed for medicinal purposes. Amphetamines, for example, were first synthesized by the German pharmacologist L. Edeleano in 1887. The related compound, methamphetamine (today known as speed, ice or shabu) was first created in Japan in 1919. In 1927, British chemist Gordon Alles discovered the stimulating effects of meth, realizing their potential for increasing alertness and alleviating fatigue. In 193
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PAINKILLER-POPP
and Matthew Perry

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bandwagon

The success of the Live Strong bracelet has spawned an army of copycats. What's next in this battle of the wristbands?

DIGITAL ARTWORK BY MARLONE RUBIO

CKS

What the fu...?!"

rs who were rendered job- ve midgets, bossy fat peo- esses who shot to fame equire sets, writers or gen- In 2021, when a severely at you to devour another 15 seconds or less, it will ne reality television land- estingly, the price of this same.

Y

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ntless "American Idol" counterparts. Among past is the only one who still a healthy career. The y Aiken and Fantasia Bar- ng the market with similar v to cannibalize potential een more upbeat locally, rk, Christian and Erik all another.

be, it's astonishing how so ters continue to audition coming the next recording la Abdul's singing voice or Sandara Park's "talent." istband to bankroll their your wrists in the dark. elodrama, do it with some rning by the eerie glow of lit it, Zsa Zsa! "Di- *ao lang..."*) Ew.

G stars Winona Ryder

in American pharmaceuti- the patent to the Alles dis- the drug as a nasal decon- It didn't take too long for hose inhalers and suck out r William Burroughs was open nasal inhalers to ex- content.

behind the cavalier atti- rescription drug abuse is to home. Who would've pushers? Such is the case a self-made entrepreneur, that his mother got him ing aid Stillnox. Cut to a *vu*, Mother Superior has a Certain cross-examined ir self-prescribing ways to well. This is attributed to the fact that in the past, directives regarding prescribing antidepressants and anxiety relievers were less stringent. Your *lola* may not know it, but she could be a junkie too!

Sobering facts

Ignorance could not be more blissful in this case. Yet such unawareness could also be quite dangerous. Prescription drugs are not too distant from their more disreputable relatives. Stimulants like Adderall and Ritalin are kin to cocaine, ecstasy and crystal meth. Painkillers are within the same family tree as heroin, while Valium and Xanax have Sunday brunch with cousin Roofie or rhohypnol, the date rape drug. Aside from being addictive, these drugs have alarming side effects. NBC Dateline recently came out with a study that the painkiller Celebrex may seem harmless now, but not for your heart when you're older. Suddenly cutting out Valium from your not-so-square meals also induces withdrawal symptoms, leading to irritability, slurred speech, seizures and even death.

Psychiatrist Dr. Nikita Cardinez-Tan, who specializes in substance abuse, reveals "mixing Vs with alcohol is the 'in' thing these days. Many kids don't realize that mixing these two is very dangerous. It causes respiratory depression, and it can even kill you!" She adds that Valiums are habit-forming—when a user builds up a tolerance for a 5-mg pill, they may start upping their self-dosage to 10 mg. Dr. Cardinez-Tan has even had cases of patients who would experiment with anything to get that desired *tama*, including—get this—Pledge and Diatabs! "What can start out as harmless experimentation can lead to real addiction," she explains.

Her advice? "I always tell patients to find out what they really want to get out of it. Usually, young people want immediate gratification. When you're younger, you only think of the now. If you're taking these drugs to get away from your problems, it's only a temporary solution; it just numbs yourself for a while but it does not take away your problem. There's no medicine out there to take away your problem."

Wreckreation

Amusement, diversion, stimulation—such are the eternal afflictions of restless youth. While it's true that the so-called "Me Years" are defined by adventure and experimentation, manifested in various strains of recreation, reality checks are oft overlooked. To borrow author Pearl Buck's words, "The young do not know enough to be prudent, and therefore attempt the impossible." When you're young, it's easy enough to dabble with intoxication. The harder part is convincing yourself that you're not invincible.

**All names have been changed to protect the not-so-innocent! E-mail the author at: inca_orange@yahoo.com*

MODEL YOUTH

***Price:** A broken condom, one too many beers, a cocaine addiction or all of the above*

Proceeds go to Pinoy teen celebrities who a) have sired bastard babies with other show biz offspring, b) need to take anger management classes, or c) are now in rehab as a form of rebellion. As concerned citizens, this is our way of saying "More power to you!" as these idols tread the path to fame, fortune and personal hell. One more time but in Tagalog: Mabuhay!

DBD DBD DBD

***Price:** P80, or the going rate for a pirated "Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle" DVD in Makati Cinema Square, plus the parking fee*

Proceeds go to our enterprising Muslim brothers and sisters from Mindanao who really need the money, not to their gazillionaire American equivalents who'll merely show it off on "MTV Cribs." Until big-league film companies pay *us* to watch their piece-of-shit movies, the bootleg versions of "Catwoman," "Jersey Girl" and "Open Water" will do just fine. Or some good old amateur porn lovingly called *"DBD Iks."*

NOYPI NA NAMAN

YPI NA NAMAN

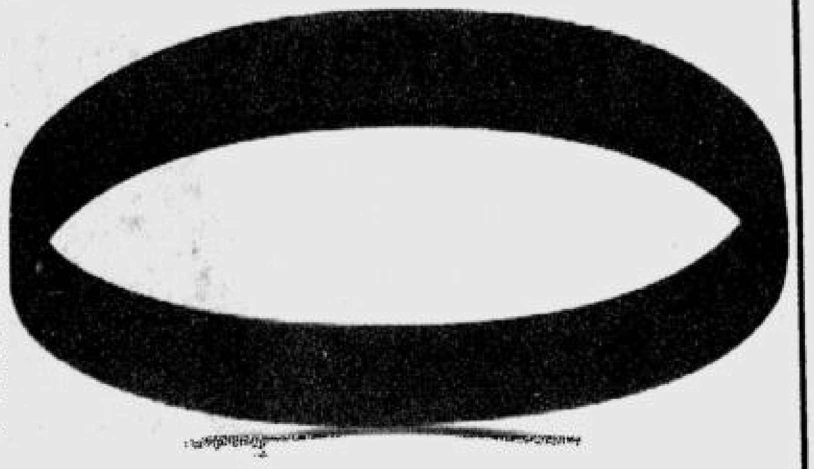
***Price:** A US Green Card for a box of 10*

Proceeds go to old-school entertainment journalists who have the fantastically annoying habit of writing about Tia Carrere, Rob Schneider, Lou Diamond Phillips, Paulo Montalban, Robin Williams' wife(!), Michael Jackson's maid(!) and every single quote, unquote "Filipino-American" who has ever set foot on Hollyweird, whether we give a turd about them or not. We hope to raise enough funds so that we can put their six-degrees-style of reporting on death watch and finally live in a world without tiresome *balut*-related interviews.

ENOUGH

***Price:** $1:P54*

Proceeds go to the anonymous bandwagoneers who have clearly abused the public's kindness by peddling a never-ending supply of jelly bracelets and capitalizing on this fund-raising trend. (Their motto: "Tsunami aid is the new black.") Strangely enough, by wearing yet another silly wristband, you will be taking a heroic stand both for and against this lame pop culture development. More important, you will put across that you know exactly how to turn youth marketing on its head while keeping your tongue firmly in cheek at the same time.



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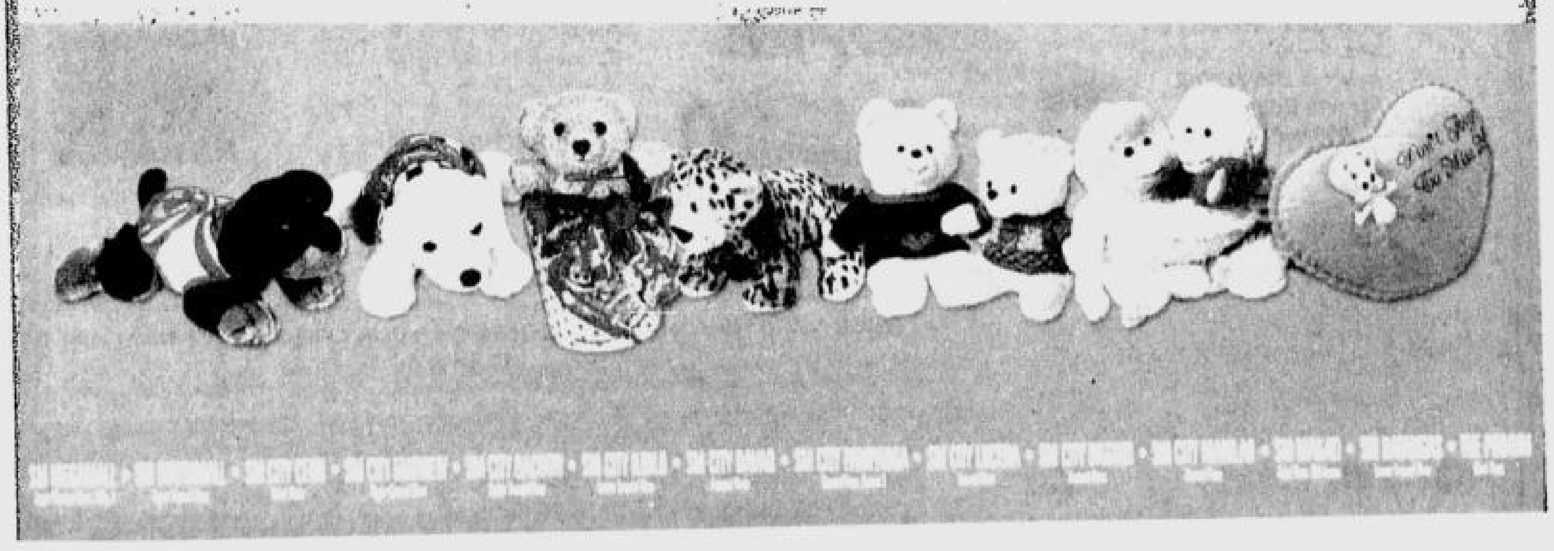

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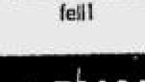
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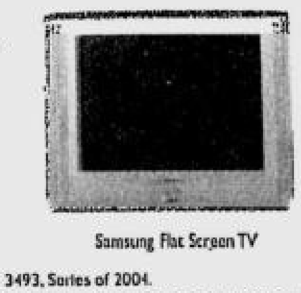
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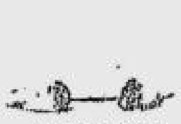
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Superclub takes flight

By Jojo Nones
Photos by Eddie Boy Escudero and Willy Saw

THE CURRENT burgeoning of The Fort's "anti-It-ness" has finally given rise to the newest party Mecca in the metro. It's for everyone who's anybody and somebody in Manila—from taipans to young Turks, from the jetsetter to the stylish set, from power-reining luminaries to beautiful, young things.

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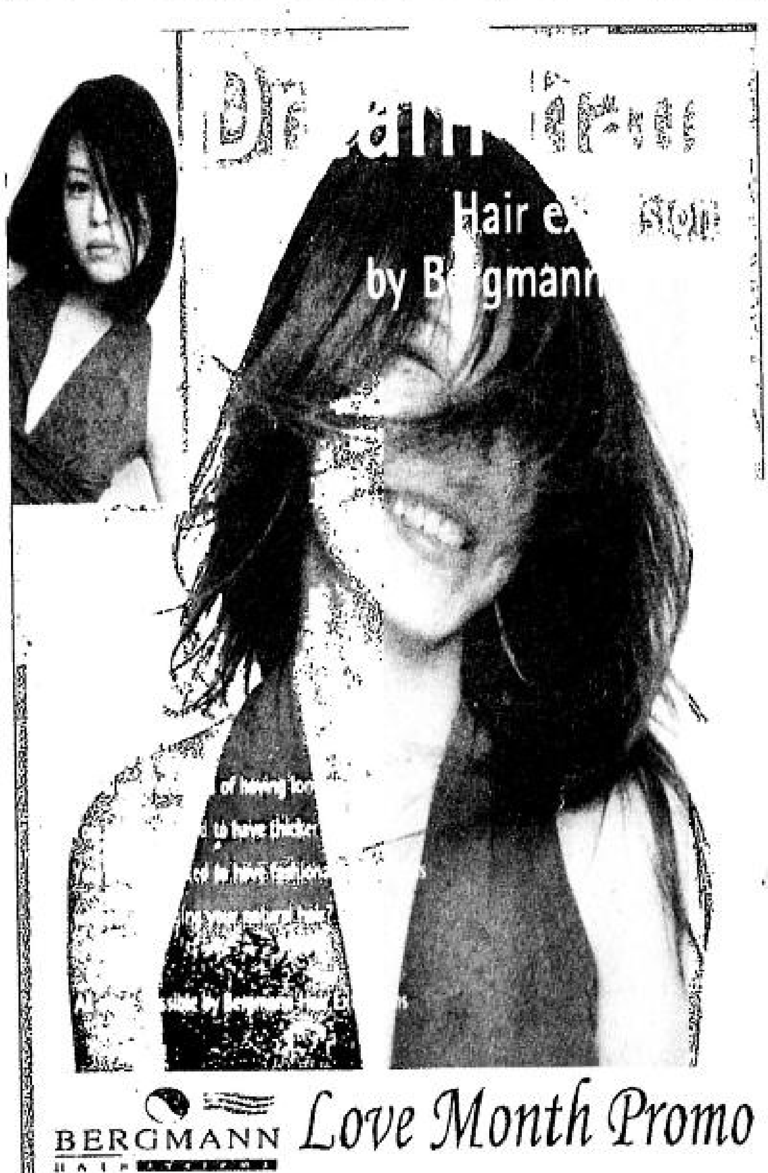
8:00 PM, Feb. 14, 2005 Philippine Trade Training Center-PTTC (Roxas Blvd., corner Gil Puyat Ave.) • Ticket includes 1 softdrink, free flowing peanuts, theater seating (no tables), and large dance floor. Food sold before and during concert at PTTC Makati Skyline Restaurant's reasonable prices

For tickets, please call Agriwatch 8522466 / 8516635 (weekdays) or 8322112 (weekends)



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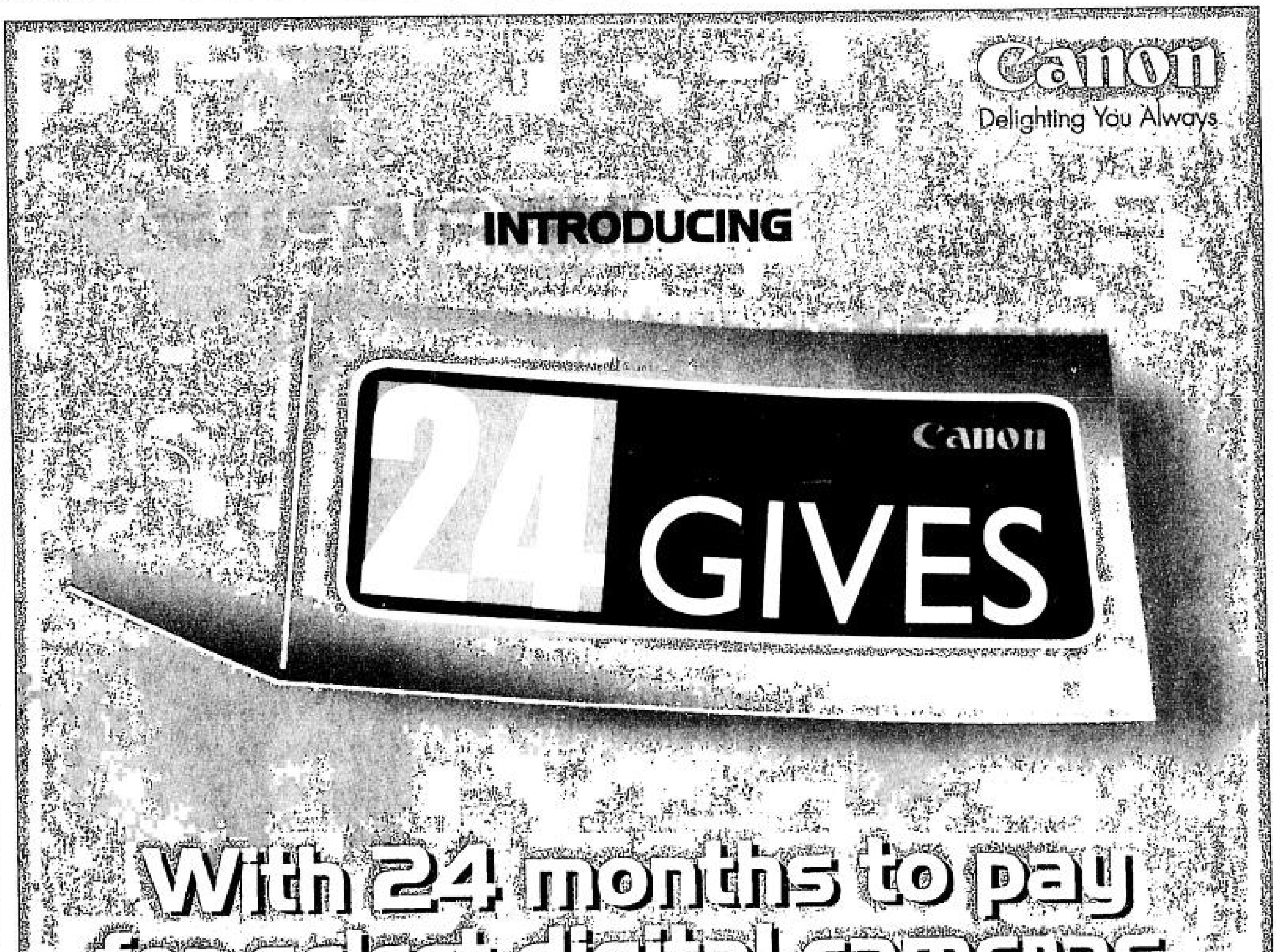

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ROBINA Gokongwei

SMART Infinity's Tom Valderrama

HANDS DOWN. Celine Lopez

GLOW, GLOW, GLOW. Dawn Zulueta

IN THE HOUSE. Rajo Laurel

MAMA'S BOYS. Raymond and Richard Gutierrez with mom Annabelle Rama

Superclub takes flight

PULSATING Heart Evangelista

GET SHORTY. [illegible]

GOLDEN BOYS. Gutierrez and Gomez at Embassy [illegible]

YIN YANG. Shirley Bitong and Cindy Yang

SAVANNAH and Francis Lumen

BETTER THAN BARE. Cindy Kurleto

GOING GLOBAL. Taguig Mayor Fred Tinga and wife Kay

From page F1

Jan. 12, Erik Cua, Tim Yap, Jon Herrera and Fernando Aracama hosted a special dinner at Embassy's fine-dining area that attracted an interesting mix of personalities—from Robina Gokongwei to Dawn Zulueta, from Letty Sy (Henry Sy's better half) to Celine Lopez.

While the rest of Embassy, particularly the club and diner, still await the grand Feb. 8 opening next week, Embassy's fine-dining section is already in full operation. Simply called Cuisine, this sleek, upscale resto and wine bar is a cornucopia of elegance, unique ambience, good music and great food. Personally, I think it's one of the best-designed places in Manila, with its proud all-glass-and-steel entrance hallway and an amazing second level that actually looks more posh than any regular hotel lobby.

Embassy partner Erik Cua (who also owns Temple in Greenbelt and Basement in Eastwood), designed the interiors himself, taking inspiration from Philippe Starck's ethos that honesty and integrity should be at the core of design. Cuisine's glossy interiors play on grays and whites, mixing glass with plastic, fashion with novelty. There are three pockets that inspire a sense of mystery: a sunken area facing the bar that features a video wall showing all sorts of eye candy, from art pieces to nature scenarios; a lounge area with long sofas and day beds, perfect for cocktails pre-party socials, and a dramatically back-lit posterior dining area, for a more romantic and intimate dining experience.

Embassy partner and renowned chef Fernando Aracama (architect of Uva's dazzling carte du jour) sought to "have a feel of the place first," before he went on to design Cuisine's menu. The result is an infused French-Japanese bistro-type fare that prides itself in being "created," as well as familiar. The idea was to have cuisine that didn't go by the book, unpretentious and undisguised," Fernando explains. "It's real food that's never meant to be clever. In Embassy Cuisine, we have everything for everyone."

Embassy's soon-to-open club section is easily the biggest, most spacious in Manila. The dance floor alone is a sight to behold, with its hard wooden floors, and the massive DJ booth across.

The club is divided into a main room and a VIP room, both displaying distinct Japanese designs. Modern origami dictates the main room interiors, with portions of the floor folding up (how very Extreme Games!) and pod architecture "that stand out, *parang pinatong lang*," Erik adds. Classical Japanese meanwhile, decrees the VIP room, with a Japanese patio-like center surrounded by gorgeous Japanese beds.

Embassy partner, resident DJ and R&B music program director Jon Herrera is excited about Embassy's concept nights, featuring the club's powerhouse resident DJs, including Mars Miranda, Martin Pulgar, DJ Ace and Owens Sun. It's "SuperKlasse" Wednesdays with mainstream hiphop for the main room and slow, soulful, old school, jazz-infused jams for the VIP section. It's "Musik" Fridays featuring multigenre celebrity DJs and party hosts for the main room and "chi-chi" hiphop for the VIP section. It's "Dance Deluxe" Saturdays with a full-on house set featuring New York rhythms, popular vocals and funky disco tech for the main room and classic anthems, beach house and chill house for the VIP section. Thursdays are reserved for special events and private gatherings. "We'd rather have three strong, solid nights," says Jon, "than have several hodgepodge nights that don't do the club any good."

Embassy's café/diner/brasserie section is slated to open on the same day as the club. It will feature a juice bar and all-day breakfast delights, with original but familiar food. Unavailable in other diners, these all-time favorites will be presented in a "unique way," according to Erik and Fernando.

Embassy is certainly gearing up to be Manila's one-stop destination for nocturnal creatures in search of a new place to haunt: cozy, intimate dinner and some cocktails at Cuisine, adrenaline-fueled dancing at the club, and post-party refreshments at the brasserie. If the handsome diversity of people that attended the special Jan. 12 dinner is any indication, then Embassy is surely crossing over from being anti-It to being the It venue of 2005.

E-mail the author at jojonones@yahoo.com.

HOT MAMA. [illegible]

THE DOCTOR IS OUT. [illegible] Vicki Belo

MTV'S main man [illegible]

FROM DYNASTIES TO EMBASSIES. Henry Sy and Mariano Cua

PALANGGA ROSE. [illegible]

STUCK IN A MOMENT. WENDY [illegible]

SIP IT UP. Jon-Jon Rufino drinking a glass of Embassy Iced Chee

THREESOME. Tina Maristela-Ocampo, Atom Henares and Doris Ho

MIGUEL Pastor, Ino Manalo and Ben Chan

HAPPY MEAL. Kristine and George Yang of McDonald's

Can't Take Our Eyes Off Martin & Patti

SMART GOLD

presents

Martin Nievera & Patti Austin LIVE in Concert

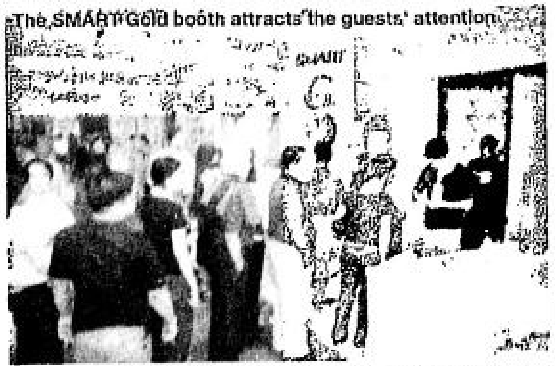
January 28 and 29, 2005, were historic days for fans of OPM and soul music. One of the country's most popular performers, Martin Nievera, and world-famous U.S. diva Patti Austin performed together live for the first time ever in two unforgettable concerts—at Cebu's Waterfront Hotel and at the Araneta Coliseum in Manila the following day.

With SMART Gold as major sponsor, it was as expected a glitzy and formal affair. The men in attendance looked dapper in their long sleeved shirts and black pants while the women exuded charm and elegance in their evening attire. Prior to the concert itself, the guests and VIPs were pampered the SMART Gold way with a cocktail party to set the mood and break the ice. Delicious canapés were served, washed down with an overflowing supply of wine. Others visited the SMART Gold booth to discover for themselves what perks and privileges await them, not least being the discounted tickets to this eagerly anticipated event.

On stage, the chemistry between the two entertainers was electrifying. They kicked off the evening with two duets, "Do You Love Me" and "Say That You Love Me", followed by a medley of classic standard hits like "I've Got You Under My Skin", "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes" and "True Love" where Martin and Patti alternated on the vocals. Everyone in the audience was obviously captivated by what they were hearing, enthralled like never before. Martin's trademark showmanship was on overdrive as he connected with the audience, infusing a bit of his "Madman" humor here and there drawing laughs from them and giving the whole affair a warm and light mood. Patti appeared comfortable and composed as she performed several solo numbers, including her signature hit "In My Life" and "Rhythm of the Street". No doubt the audience was expecting a belter or two for the encore, and that is exactly what they got in the forms of the classic "How Do You Keep The Music Playing" and OPM favorite "Umagang Kayganda"—a duet, no less, which endeared Patti to her fans even more as she demonstrated her singing prowess in our mother tongue.

Proof right there that you have indeed struck gold when you find yourself at a concert of this calibre. And if you weren't there, it's never too late to sign up for SMART Gold where a whole world of perks and privileges awaits you.

The audience at Araneta Coliseum



The SMART Gold booth attracts the guests' attention

Outside Cebu's Waterfront Hotel

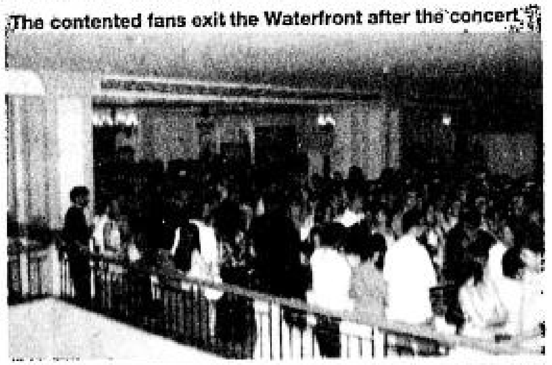
Face off: Martin and Patti wow the audience

The impressive stage set up at the Araneta Coliseum

Spotlight on Patti Austin

The dapper Martin Nievera

Martin and Patti perform a classic duet



The contented fans exit the Waterfront after the concert

Patti Austin hits a high note

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' Promo period is from Jan. 30-Feb.10, 2005. Per DTI-NCR permit no. 0453, series of 2005.

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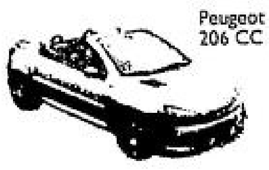

Peugeot 206 CC sports car***

TONES

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You Don't Know Me/Too Shy To Say	Pops	fire2
You Take My Breath Away	Pops	fire3
Bakit Ngayon Ka Lang	Pops	fire4
Say That You Love Me	Regine	fire5
On The Wings Of Love	Regine	fire6
To Reach You	Regine	fire7
Hanggang Ngayon	Regine	fire8
Kailangan Ko'y Ikaw	Regine	fire9
You Are My Song	Regine	fire10

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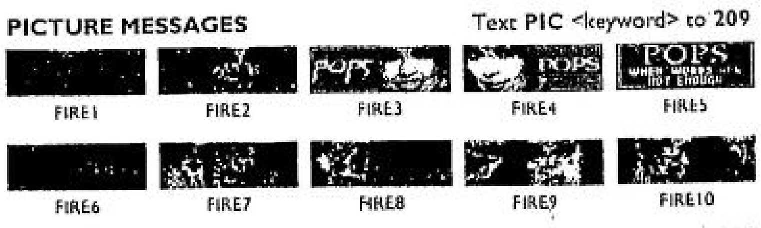
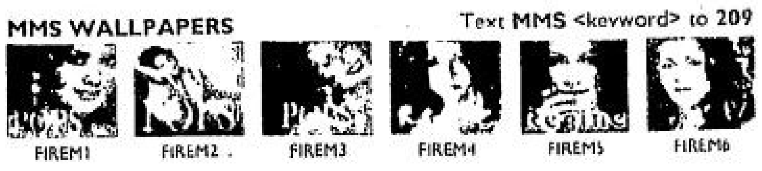


MMS WALLPAPERS Text **MMS** <keyword> to 209



Promo period is from January 30 - June 30, 2005. Per DTI-NCR permit no. 0411, series of 2005.

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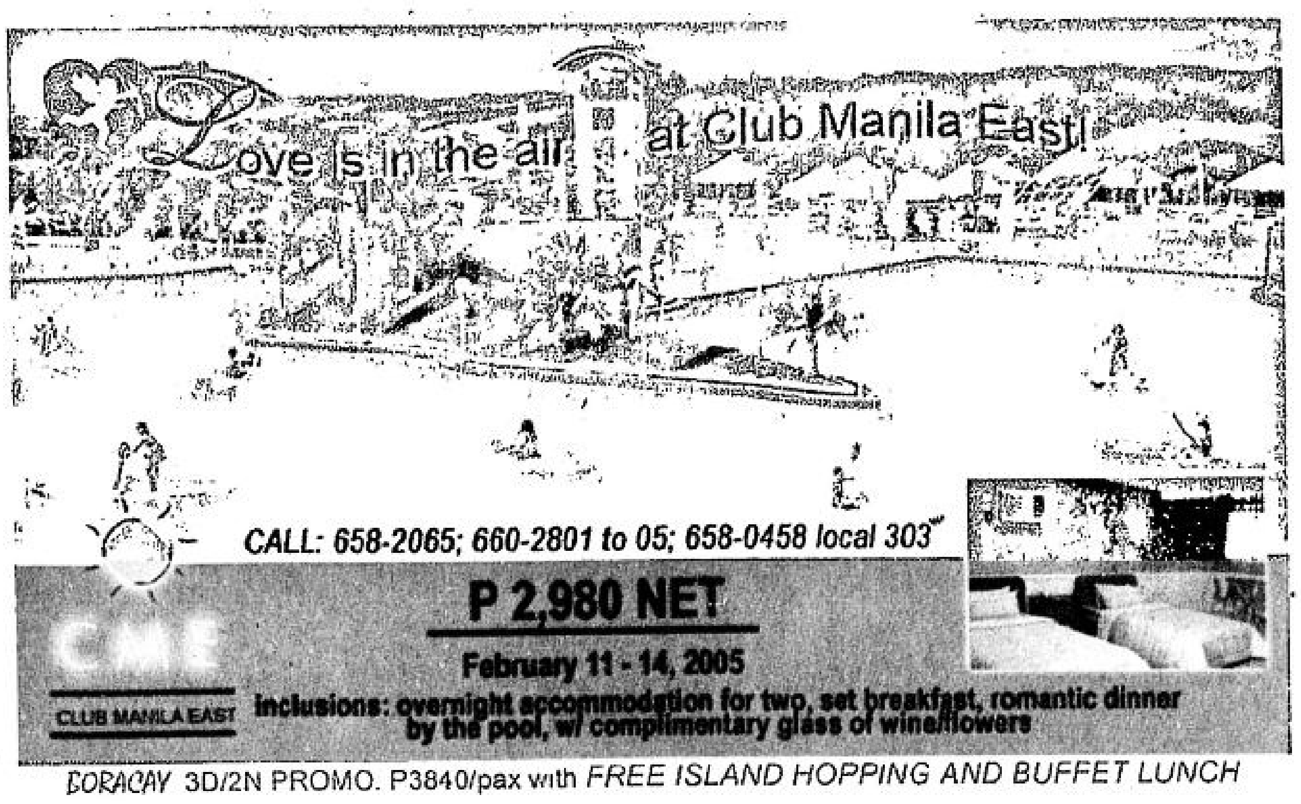
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Shang-Mac attack

THE VIEW from the main pool

By Pam Pastor

YOU'RE in paradise and you don't want to leave. Shangri-La's Mactan Island Resort's 10:30 shuttle bus is about to leave for Cebu City but a lot of the seats are empty. The next one leaves in an hour and it's safe to say that it wouldn't be full either.

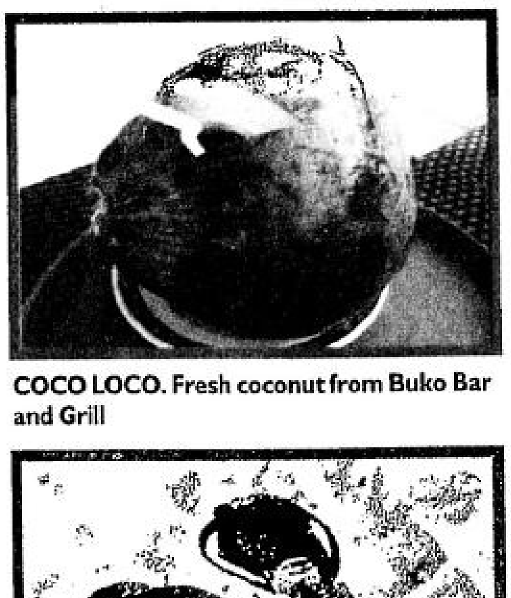
It seems that no one wants to leave paradise—and that is no big surprise.

The cool and spacious lobby welcomed you at noon. You should have waited for your turn to check-in like good adults are supposed to but the lure of the beach was too strong. You ran down to the sandy shore and let the tide kiss your toes. Your jeans contrasted with the bikinis and the sarongs that were in abundance but it didn't matter. When the water beckons, one must come.

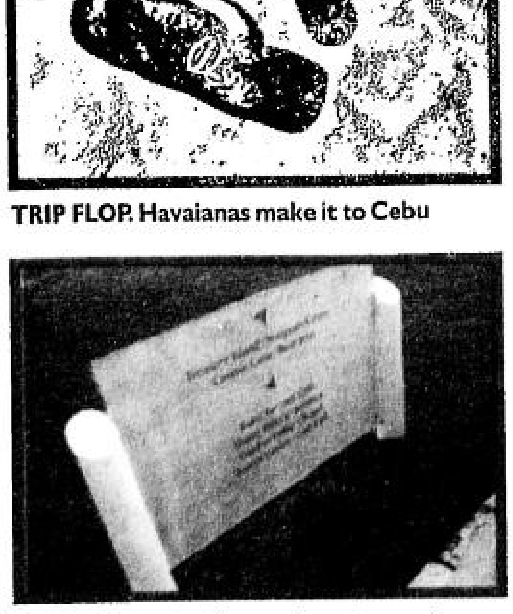
After finally finding the strength to tear yourself away from the beach, you went back to your room but only to change into proper beachwear. Eager to go out in the sun again, you stood in front of the elevator, tapping your foot impatiently. When it finally opened, a familiar face walked out.

"Uy, si Boy Abunda," the cleaning lady whispered loudly from behind her cart of hotel toiletries, trying to catch the attention of the bellboy who was standing nearby. The talk show master was fiddling with the keycard and open-

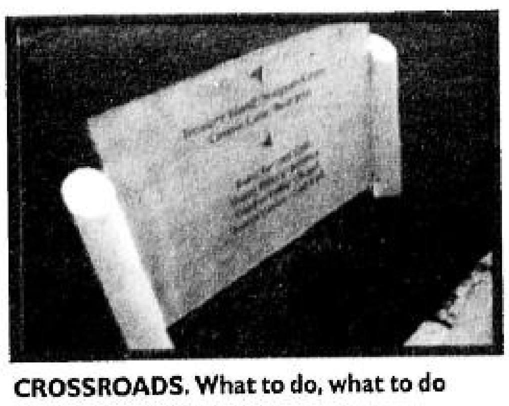
SHANG-MAC/ G2



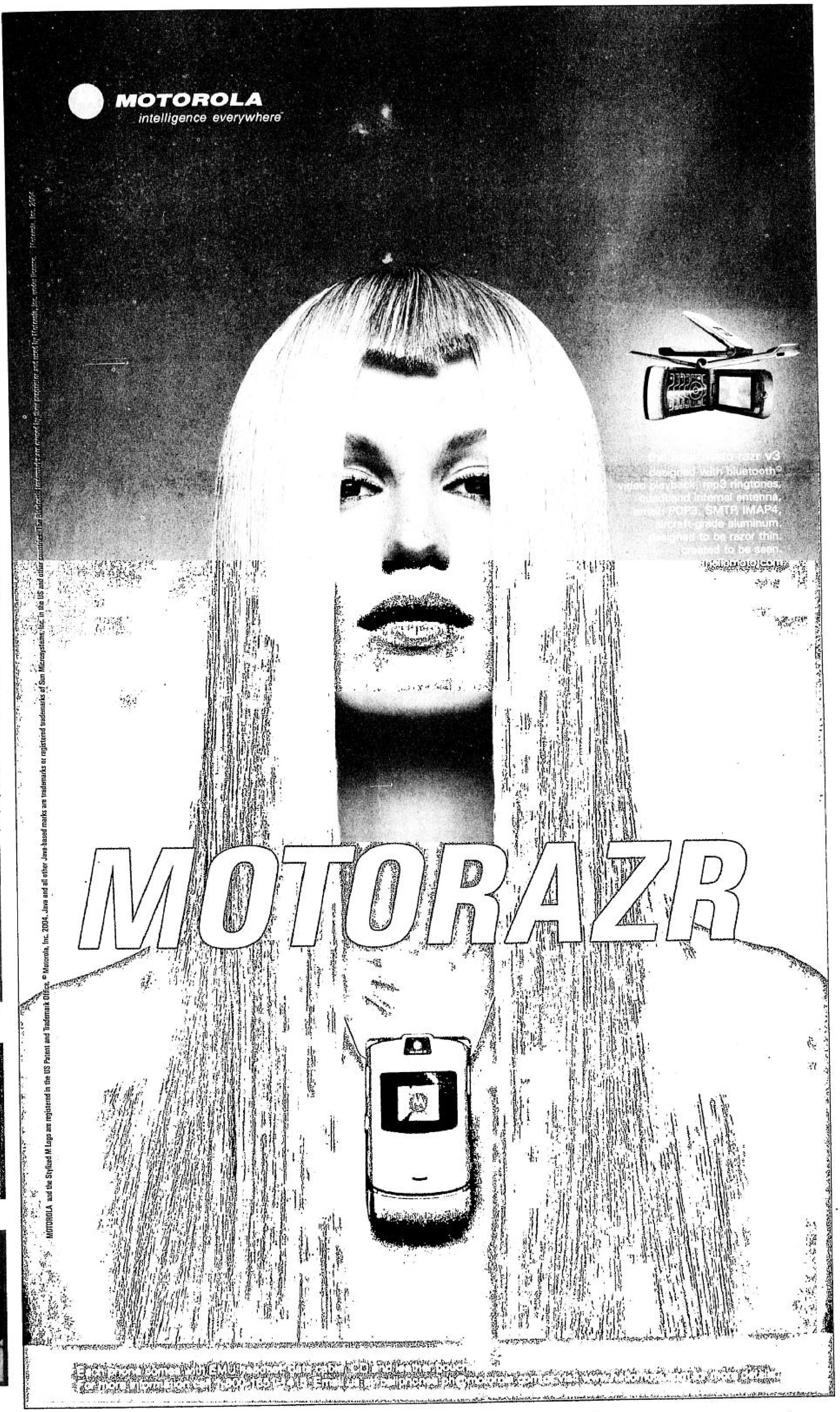
COCO LOCO. Fresh coconut from Buko Bar and Grill



TRIP FLOP. Havaianas make it to Cebu



CROSSROADS. What to do, what to do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READY, jet set, go...

SPARTY for two

SEAFOOD SPECIAL at the Cowrie Cove

Shang-Mac attack

DIVING TRIO

THIS IS where you get a McTan

PHOTOS BY PAM PASTOR

From page G1

ing his door, unaware that he had just made someone's day. Ah, the power of celebrity.

For years now, our brains have been bombarded with scary factoids about staying out in the sun during the evil hours between ten and two. But all the warnings were eclipsed by the deadly combination of crashing waves and comfortable beach chairs. You were powerless. You were in love.

It was easy to burn time at the beach—you didn't even have to bring a book. There were photos to be taken, little kids to smile at, jetskiers to watch, sand turtles to build and names to carve in the sand.

But you realized that there was still so much of Shangri-La Mactan left to explore. It was time to move on. (Besides, one can only handle enough sand in one's pants until the rest of one's body screams foul.)

Coffee is to Starbucks as swimming pools are to Shangri-La Mactan. The choices were seemingly limitless although in reality, there were only two. The pool in the ocean wing had a fantastic ocean view while the main pool was divided into different sections—aside from the ubiquitous slide, there was a waterfall and areas for volleyball, water polo and basketball. There was also a pool with deck chairs so you can lie down with your body half-submerged in water. Yes, this resort aims to spoil.

Buko Bar and Grill became a favorite spot. Their fresh coconut juice was perfectly chilled—it's a must-try. The experience was made even more enjoyable when you sipped it by the pool.

If you had your way, you wouldn't have left the resort. But you had commitments, you had plans. The rest of Cebu was calling.

When you woke up the next morning, you were perky, almost bouncing off the walls—which is strange for someone who claims to be the ultimate anti-morning person. What to do, what to do, you muttered to yourself while scanning the hotel literature. There were too many choices.

> Welcome to paradise—where swimming pool choices are endless, the coconut juice is chilled and celebrity sightings are as common as Simon Cowell's bitch bytes

DO YOU love it?

Fish feeding, snorkeling, scuba, waterskiing, parasailing, speedboat rides, sea kayak, windsurfing, float rides, island tours, sailing, kneeboarding, fishing trips, tennis, golf, board games, billiards, mahjong, table tennis, workout at the gym, get a massage, hide out in the sauna, get bubbly in the Jacuzzi. The list seemed endless but your stomach had the answer.

Breakfast.

You stood in line at the breakfast buffet and found a seat. While you were exclaiming over the longganisa, your eyes landed on yet another familiar face. Pops Fernandez was sitting a few tables away.

Oh yes, even "It" girls need their cereal.

After breakfast, a silly thought entered your head. Your nails were chipped and you wanted to get them done. You visit the salon to check if you could schedule an appointment. Apparently there were a lot of chipped nails in the area—they were fully booked.

You realized it was time to leave for yet another appointment in the city. You wished you can be a rebel and just forget about it. But your inner moral monster prevailed and pushed you onto the shuttle. You vowed to return to paradise—and to return early.

Much to your chagrin, early was seven hours later. You wished you can latch onto the hands of the world's clock and never let go. There was still so much you wanted to do. And the beach was calling you again.

You sat on your beach chair and dug your toes into the sand, just taking everything in. You knew you were going to say goodbye soon. You walked back to the pool, jumped in and took refuge by the waterfall. You watch an entire Korean family play water basketball. They would probably stay longer, you thought to yourself. That's why they seemed so happy.

You walked over to the pool with the deck chairs and volleyball net. Minus the water, you're an okay volleyball player. With it, you were useless. Dejected, you squeezed yourself between two deck chairs, again willing time to stop.

Soon, it was time to pack. Soon, it would be time to leave.

But you couldn't, you refused to. There was still so much to do. Seafood to be savored at Cowrie Cove, pizza to be devoured at Paparazzi, Hot Stone Therapy, Seaweed Tranquility Wrap and Grand Indulgence and the three-and-a-half hour Shangri-La Experience at the spa.

You called the airline again, for what seemed like the nth time that day. All flights to Manila the next day were still full—they just wouldn't budge. Briefly, you considered asking for names of passengers and calling them up in an attempt to bribe them into switching flights with you but you realized that was impossible. It was time to swallow the truth.

Grudgingly, you started packing your things. The sarongs, the bathing suits, the jeans, the still somewhat sandy flip flops all flew back into your suitcase—and even they seemed reluctant to go. You waved goodbye to what had been your home for close to two days and shut the door.

Check-out was quick and painless. While waiting for the shuttle to take you back to the airport, you argued over whether the girl standing in front of you was Janna Victoria. No it's not, you said, although truthfully, you can't remember what she looks like. Yes, it is, your companion said. No, it's not, you said again.

"Janna!" someone called out and the-girl-who-might have-or-might- not-have-been Janna turned and smiled at her friend. End of argument.

Janna, her friends and her luggage soon disappeared into a van. You went back to staring at the walls and listening to the girl singing in the lobby lounge.

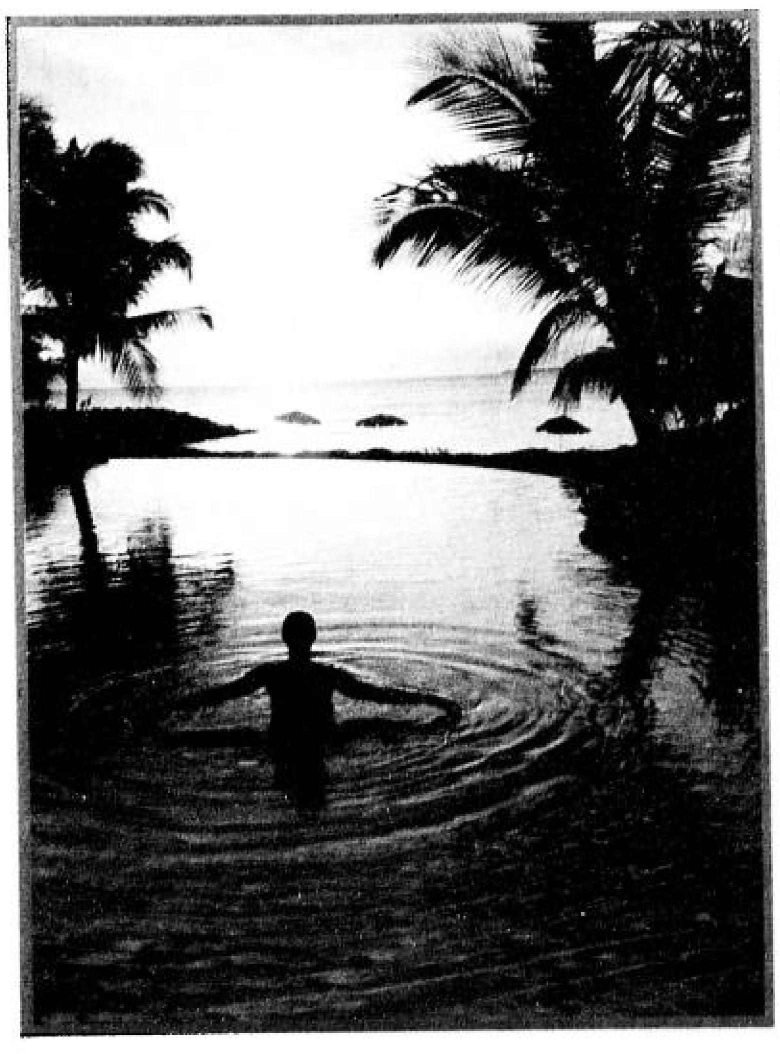
Soon, the shuttle pulled up into the driveway. You got on, resisting any urges to throw a tantrum. You really didn't want to leave.

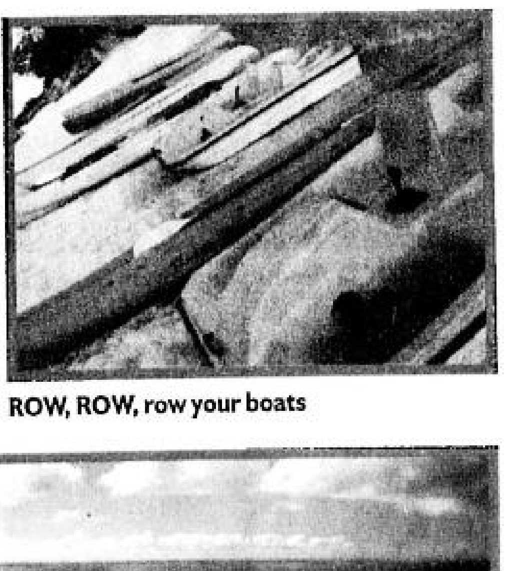
As the shuttle rolled away, you raised your hand and limply waved goodbye to your beloved Shang. You'll be back soon, you thought. It was a wish, a vow, a promise.

Because you know that even if there are swimming pools to jump into, coconut juice to be downed and celebrities to be spotted in Manila, it just wouldn't be the same.

Shangri-La's Mactan Island Resort is at Punta Engaño Road, Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu. For inquiries, call (63 32) 2310288, fax (63 32) 2311688, e-mail mac@shangri-la.com or visit www.shangri-la.com.

E-mail the author at ppastor@inquirer.com.ph.

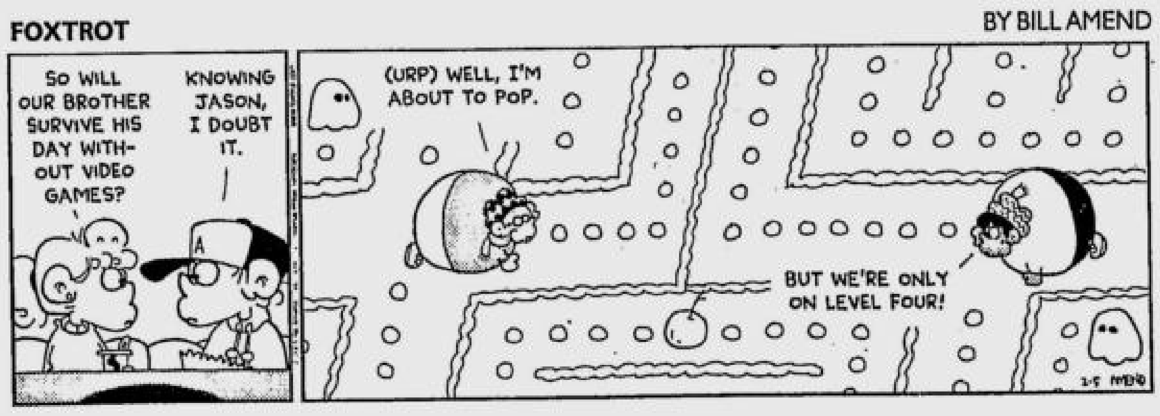

THAT'S hot


ROW, ROW, row your boats

WATER everywhere

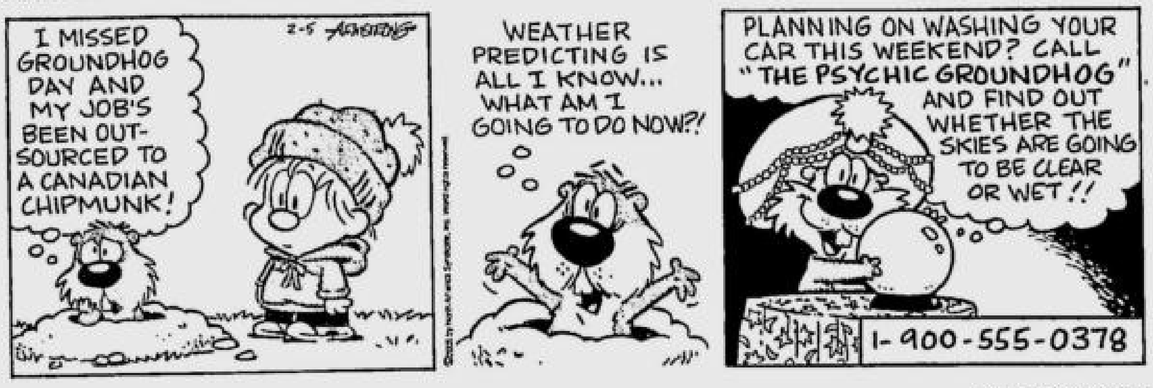
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


SO WILL OUR BROTHER SURVIVE HIS DAY WITHOUT VIDEO GAMES?
KNOWING JASON, I DOUBT IT.
(URP) WELL, I'M ABOUT TO POP.
BUT WE'RE ONLY ON LEVEL FOUR!
2-5

MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I MISSED GROUNDHOG DAY AND MY JOB'S BEEN OUTSOURCED TO A CANADIAN CHIPMUNK!
2-5 ARMSTRONG
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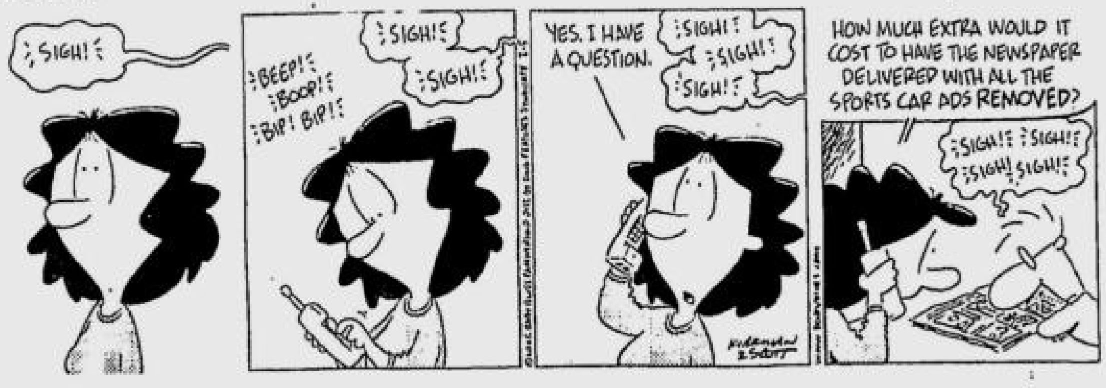
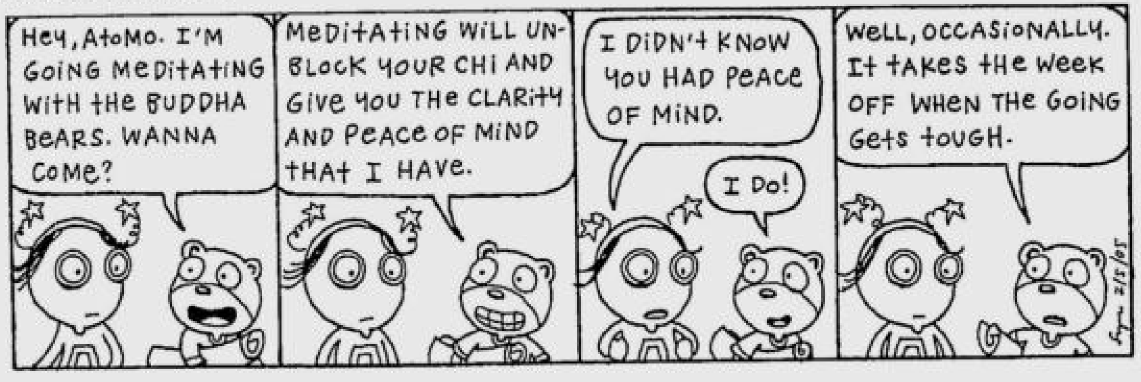
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


SIGH!
BEEP! BOOP! BIP! BIP!
SIGH!
SIGH!
YES. I HAVE A QUESTION.
SIGH! SIGH! SIGH!
HOW MUCH EXTRA WOULD IT COST TO HAVE THE NEWSPAPER DELIVERED WITH ALL THE SPORTS CAR ADS REMOVED?
SIGH! SIGH! SIGH! SIGH!
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Hey, AtoMo. I'M GoiNG MeDitAtiNG WitH the BUDDHA BeARS. WANNA CoMe?
MeDitAtiNG WiLL UNBLocK YouR CHi AND Give You THe CLARity AND PeAce oF MiND tHAt I HAVe.
I DiDN't KNoW You HAD PeAce OF MiND.
I Do!
WeLL, OCCASioNALLy. It tAKes tHe Week OFF WHeN THe GoiNG Gets tougH.
2/5/05

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: Others appreciate you for your own unique style. You're memorable! You're particularly fluent with language and all forms of communication. Many of you lead secret private lives. You are opinionated, but intelligent. (Sometimes you're excitable.) This is a year of major change, perhaps as significant as in 1996. Be open to whatever unfolds.

Birthdate of: Barbara Hershey, actress; William Burroughs, writer; Jeremy Sumpter, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You will probably call attention to yourself today. Conversations with bosses and authority figures could be significant. Put on your best public mask.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Try to do something different and out of the ordinary today. Go someplace you've never been to before. Visit new shops or restaurants. Bookstores might appeal to you.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Be open to compromise today. You have to admit that somebody else's values are not yours; nevertheless, they're worth your consideration.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Today's Moon opposes your sign. This could make you feel that others oppose you as well. But this is not really the case. Be patient, because this feeling passes in two days.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Any time spent getting better organized today will be time well-spent! You want to feel like you are on top of your game. (And, of course, you are!)

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Focus on children today, if it is appropriate. Similarly, the entertainment world and show business appeal to you right now. You feel playful and flirtatious!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Put out extra energy toward home and family members today. Many of you are contemplating some major renovations and changes to where you live.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Discussions with relatives, siblings and neighbors are significant today. Don't take things personally. Today's Moon makes you identify with your opinions.

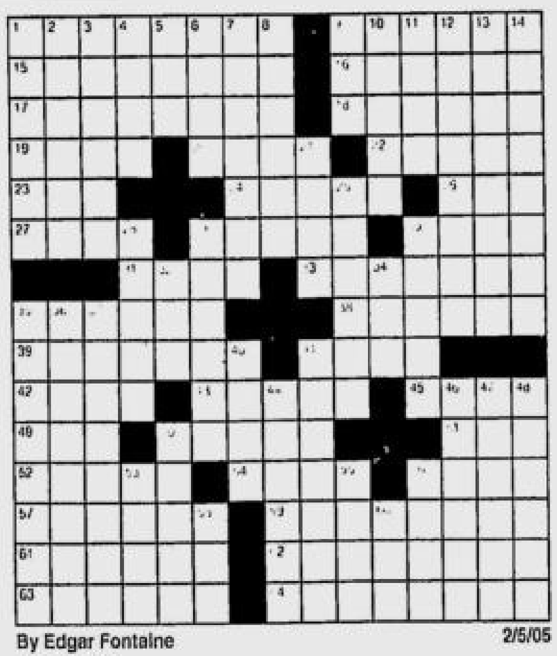
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): If shopping today, you will want to buy something that lasts a long time. You don't want to waste anything; on the other hand, labels impress you.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): With the Moon in your sign today, you have a slight edge over all the other signs. Use this to your advantage. You just might get what you ask for. Ask for anything to which you want a "yes" answer.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Solitude in pleasant surroundings will please you today. Try to carve out a little time just for yourself. Enjoy!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): A female friend can help you today. You might meet a new friend through a mutual acquaintance. It's a good day to share your hopes and dreams with others. (You might learn something useful.)

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Edgar Fontaine
Dighton, MA

2/5/05

ACROSS
1 With 64A, Redford/Moore film
9 Prejudices
15 Anchored locations
16 Diacritical mark
17 Block of stone
18 BLT part
19 Functions
20 Be up and about
22 Indian statesman
23 Formerly named
24 Actor Jeremy
26 Morsel for dobbin
27 Caesar's being
29 Open laces
30 British composer Thomas
31 Fritz or k.d.
33 Medieval musicians
35 Available for work
38 Most ill-mannered
39 Incomplete
41 Alter time
42 Rapier's cousin
43 Calyx segment
45 Go steady
49 Veterans' Day mo.
50 Beguile
51 Shutout spoiler
52 Besieged site of 1836
54 Restraining influence
56 In the mall
57 Dwell permanently
59 Amazon snake
61 Zero of Broadway
62 German spy
63 Legree-like looks
64 See 1A

DOWN
1 Unaffected
2 Hangman's knots
3 Beneficiaries
4 Aphrodite's child
5 Pres. Coolidge
6 Patronage
7 Mosquito barrier
8 Casual top
9 Nocturnal flyer
10 Windows images
11 Highest point
12 Pipefish's cousin
13 Contestants
14 Portiest
21 Churn
25 Kind of network
28 Delight
29 Remove rope bindings
30 Helped
32 MacGraw of "Love Story"
34 Impatient comment
35 Effusive welcome
36 French emperor
37 Glacial chasm
40 Cordelia's father
41 Like plywood
44 Speaker booster
46 Sites for fights
47 Permafrost region
48 Bring into play
50 Programmer
53 Small amount
55 Eur. alliance
56 New York City or London district
58 RRs on trestles
60 Tube top

Friday's Puzzle Solved

C	R	A	B	■	F	E	E	T	■	R	I	C	C	I
R	A	R	A	■	H	A	L	L	■	E	T	H	A	N
O	J	A	I	■	I	S	L	E	■	C	O	A	S	T
C	A	B	L	E	S	T	I	T	C	H	■	I	T	E
■	■	■	O	M	B	■	S	H	R	A	P	N	E	L
P	E	R	U	S	E	R	■	■	I	R	I	S	■	■
A	L	O	T	■	E	E	G	S	■	G	E	T	T	O
I	S	P	■	I	S	Q	U	A	R	E	■	O	A	T
I	F	E	C	H	■	D	Y	K	E	■	U	R	N	O
■	■	W	A	R	M	■	■	E	D	M	E	E	S	E
C	L	A	M	O	R	E	D	■	C	A	R	■	■	■
L	I	L	■	W	I	R	E	S	E	R	V	I	C	E
O	A	K	I	E	■	I	C	E	D	■	I	D	O	L
A	N	E	A	H	■	C	A	R	A	■	S	E	L	L
K	E	R	N	S	■	A	F	A	R	■	H	A	T	E

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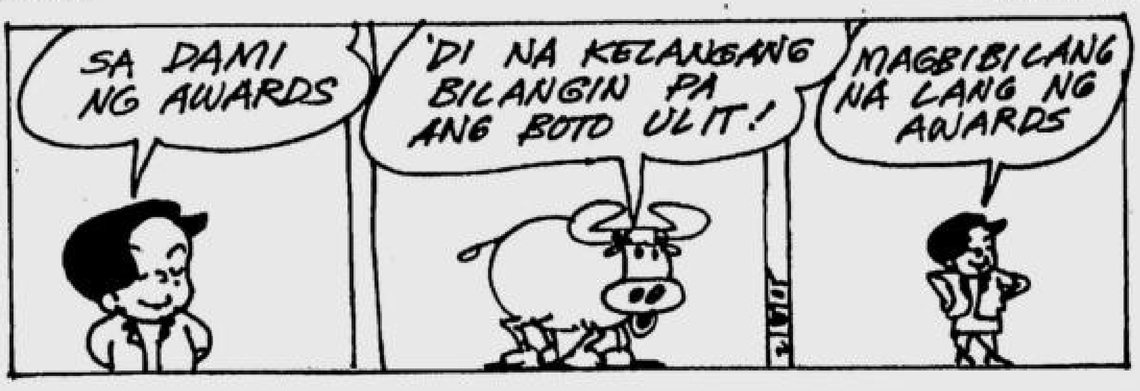
2/5/05

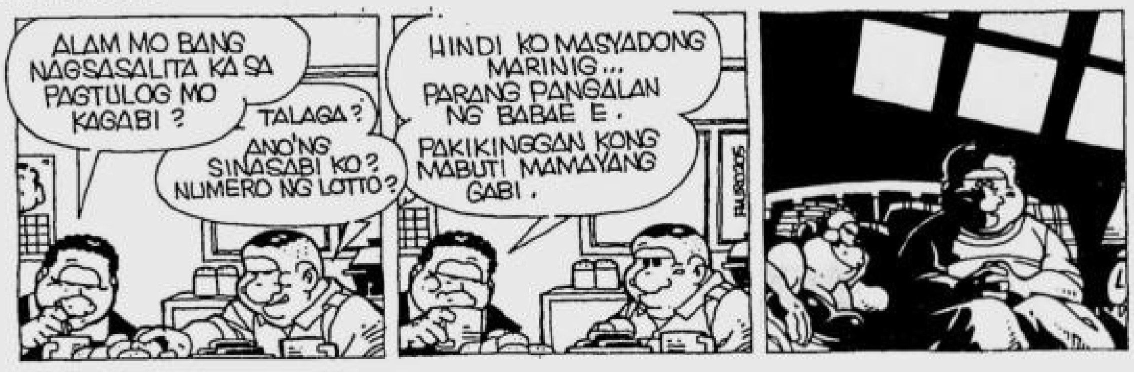
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


SA DAMI NG AWARDS
'DI NA KELANGANG BILANGIN PA ANG BOTO ULIT!
MAGBIBILANG NA LANG NG AWARDS

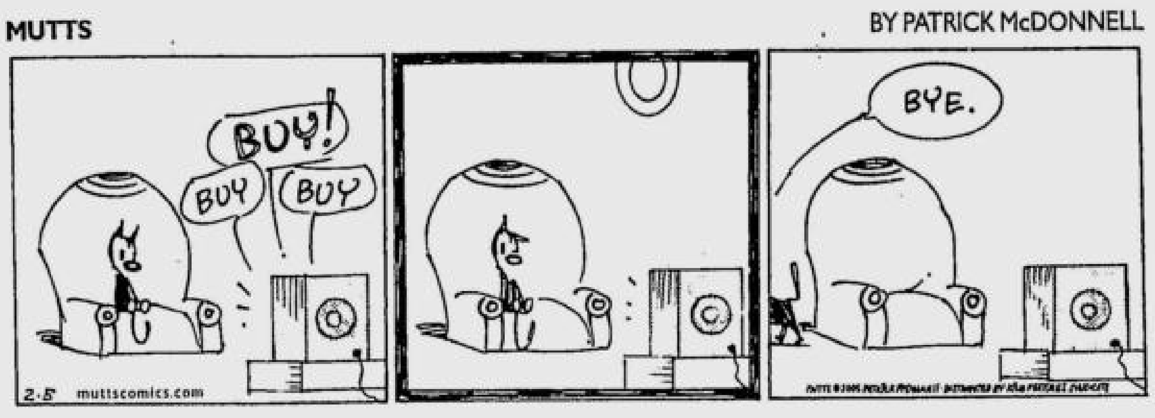
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


ALAM MO BANG NAGSASALITA KA SA PAGTULOG MO KAGABI?
TALAGA? ANO'NG SINASABI KO? NUMERO NG LOTTO?
HINDI KO MASYADONG MARINIG... PARANG PANGALAN NG BABAE E. PAKIKINGGAN KONG MABUTI MAMAYANG GABI.

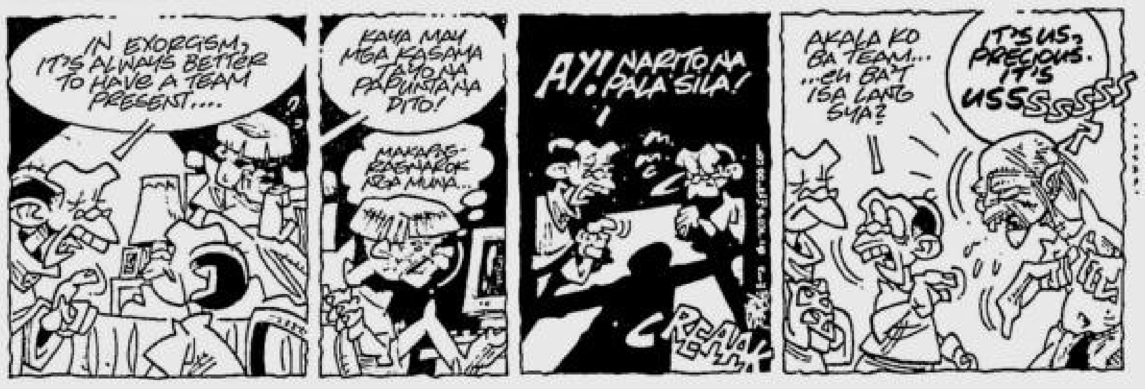
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


BUY!
BUY
BUY
BYE.
2-5 muttscomics.com

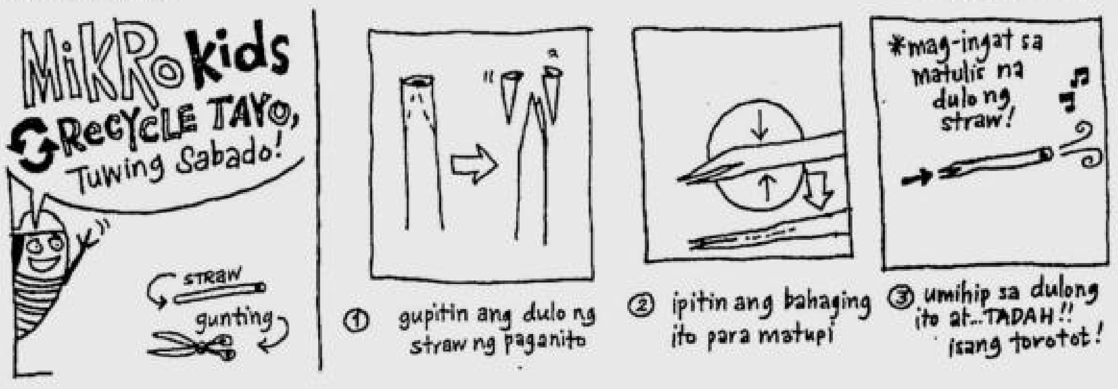
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


IN EXORCISM, IT'S ALWAYS BETTER TO HAVE A TEAM PRESENT....
KAYA MAY MGA KASAMA TAYO NA PAPUNTA NA DITO!
MAKAPAG-KASMAROK KOA MUNA...
AY! NARITO NA PALA SILA!
CREAK
AKALA KO BA TEAM... ...EH BAT ISA LANG SIYA?
IT'S US, PRECIOUS. IT'S USSSSSSS

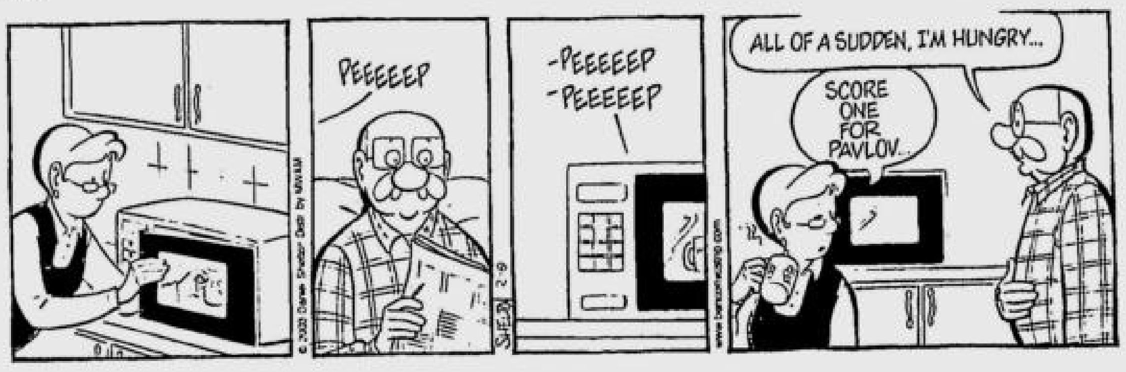
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


MiKRo Kids
Recycle Tayo, Tuwing Sabado!
straw
gunting
*mag-ingat sa matulis na dulo ng straw!
① gupitin ang dulo ng straw ng paganito
② ipitin ang bahaging ito para matupi
③ umihip sa dulong ito at...TADAH!! isang torotot!

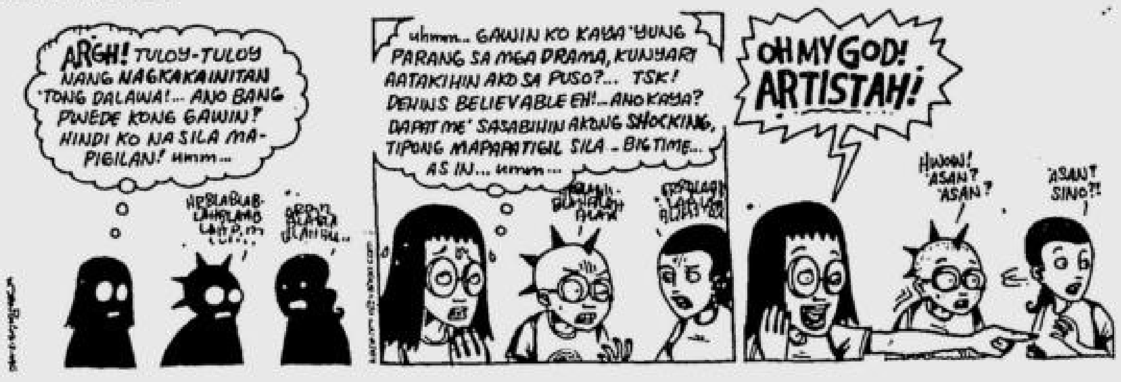
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


PEEEEEP
-PEEEEEP
-PEEEEEP
ALL OF A SUDDEN, I'M HUNGRY...
SCORE ONE FOR PAVLOV.

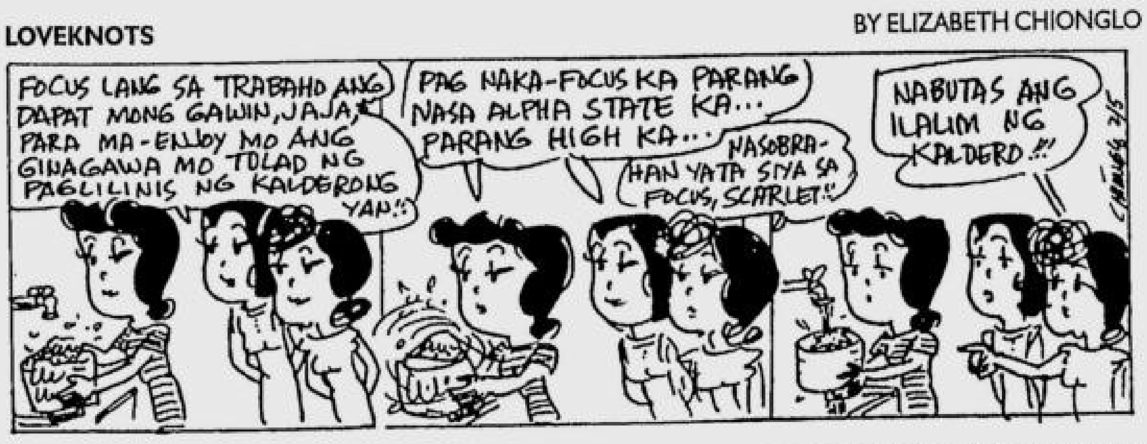
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


ARGH! TULOY-TULOY NANG NAGKAKAINITAN 'TONG DALAWA!... ANO BANG PWEDE KONG GAWIN? HINDI KO NA SILA MAPIGILAN! umm...
uhmm... GAWIN KO KAYA 'YUNG PARANG SA MGA DRAMA, KUNYARI AATAKIHIN AKO SA PUSO?... TSK! DEHINS BELIEVABLE EH!... ANO KAYA? DAPAT ME' SASABIHIN AKONG SHOCKING, TIPONG MAPAPATIGIL SILA... BIG TIME... AS IN... umm...
OH MY GOD! ARTISTAH!
HWOW! ASAN? ASAN?
ASAN? SINO?!

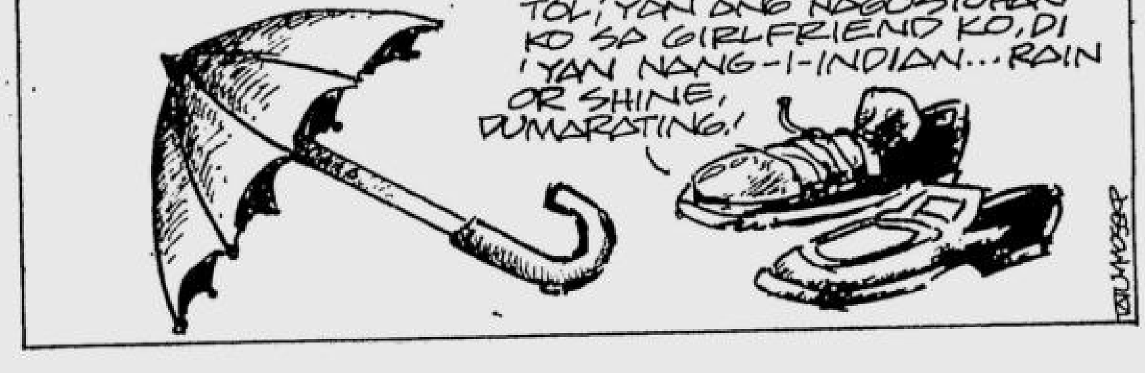
LOVEKNOTS

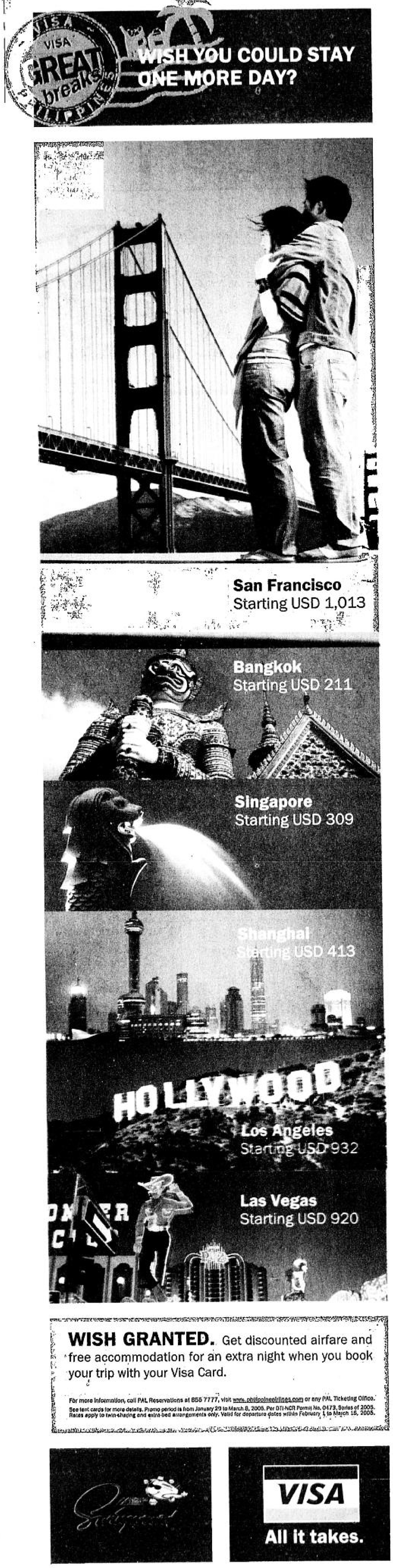
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


FOCUS LANG SA TRABAHO ANG DAPAT MONG GAWIN, JAJA, PARA MA-ENJOY MO ANG GINAGAWA MO TULAD NG PAGLILINIS NG KALDERONG YAN!
PAG NAKA-FOCUS KA PARANG NASA ALPHA STATE KA... PARANG HIGH KA...
NASOBRAHAN YATA SIYA SA FOCUS, SCARLET!
NABUTAS ANG ILALIM NG KALDERO!!!
CHIONGLO 2/5

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


TOL, YAN ANG NAGUSTUHAN KO SA GIRLFRIEND KO, DI 'YAN NANG-I-INDIAN... RAIN OR SHINE, DUMARATING!



WISH GRANTED. Get discounted airfare and free accommodation for an extra night when you book your trip with your Visa Card.

For more information, call PAL Reservations at 855 7777, visit www.philippineairlines.com or any PAL Ticketing Office.
See tent cards for more details. Promo period is from January 29 to March 8, 2005. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0473, Series of 2005. Rates apply to twin-sharing and extra-bed arrangements only. Valid for departure dates within February 1 to March 18, 2005.

Red Letter Days to Take the Blues Away

24/7

Janine Cuenca-Dario

THIS red hot month of February is crammed with several exciting events leading to the much-awaited day of love. The National Arts Month takes center stage this month with Sining Gising: Crafting Identities for Social Transformation, a series of activities in Metro Manila and numerous provinces. These include the popular Cinema Paraiso 3, Pelikula at Lipunan as well as music, dance and visual art events. The National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) is providing locals and visitors alike an opportunity to appreciate what is uniquely Filipino. For details and updates, log on to www.ncca.gov.ph or call NAM Secretariat at 527-2192 local 302 and 303 or mobile (0917) 816-9535.

Widely-acclaimed British tenor Russell Watson will also be in town this coming week for a one-night only engagement at the PICC Plenary Hall! On his first ever trip to Manila, this avowed Manchester United fan will delight the audience with his renditions of opera classics like Nessun Dorma. With all this varied entertainment offered this month, it would definitely be more than enough encouragement for potatoes to get off their couch and paint this town bright red.

Feb. 5, Saturday

Laff at Music Museum, Greenhills
Red Hot Feb with DJ Marie Garcia at Azzurro, Makati
Mongols at '70s Bistro, QC
Side A at Virgin Café, QC
The Cruzin Band at Merk's, Greenbelt 3
70's-80's: Swinging Saturdays with Boyet Almazan at Teak, Rockwell
Hype Saturdays with Rico Robles at Rack's El Pueblo
Massive Saturdays at Bed, Malate
Back to House at Temple, Greenbelt 2
Deep Groove with House DJs at Mati, Rockwell
RnB: Flava'D with DJs Rocky Rock & Shorty at Absinth, Greenbelt 3
Dancehall Saturdays at V Bar, Glorietta
House: Massive Saturdays at Bed, Malate
Kevin Ruiz at Government, Makati
Ana Fegi and King with Rush at Dish, QC
Pido at 19East
Film showing of "El cielo abierto" at Instituto Cervantes
Ana Fegi and King with Rush at Dish

Feb. 6, Sunday

BP's Neo-Filipino at CCP
Paseo Uno Trio at Paseo Uno
Reggae Mistress at Havana Greenbelt
Sandy Litchfield exhibit at Galleria Duemila
John Silva's Vintage Photos at Silver Lens Gallery

Feb. 7, Monday

Paolo Santos at Bagaberde
Bridge/Stonefree at '70s Bistro
Rock/Motown: Mondaze with Wunjo at Absinth
Acoustic Night with Release band at Temple
Mai Castro at Havana Greenbelt
Freestyle at Tavern on the Square
Soothing Sounds at Segafredo Valero, Makati
Judith Banal at Merk's
Follies de Mwah at Club Mwah!

Feb. 8, Tuesday

RnB: ZoDiac with Steve Mills at Absinth
Latin band Guarana at Havana Greenbelt
Route 70 at Merk's
Follies de Mwah at Club Mwah!
RnB: Jon Herrera & Stephen Ku at V Bar
John Silva's Vintage Photos at Silver Lens Gallery
Skarlet at '70s Bistro
Bloomfields and Coolchange at Dish

Feb. 9, Wednesday

Chinese New Year Party at Bed
Kung Hei Fat Choi at Eastwood City
Pido at '70s Bistro
RnB: Steve Mills & Aryan at Il Ponticello
Classics/Reggae with DJ Skratchmark at Absinth
Hip-hop/Reggae: Singles Night with Jon Herrera & Stephen Ku at Temple
Sabor Latino at Café Havana Malate
Mai Castro at Café Havana Greenbelt
Side A at Tavern on the Square
Merks and Friends at Merk's
Soothing Sounds with Lester Demetillo & Cynthia Ubaldo at Segafredo Valero, Makati
Retro: Flintstones at Dish

Feb. 10, Thursday

Russell Watson live in concert at PICC Plenary Hall
Mishka Adams at Merk's
Brass Munkeys at '70s Bistro
Hip-hop/RnB: Silk Thursdays with Miguel Ramirez at Temple
Rock Night & DJ Patch at Absinth
Phuture Thursdays at Bed
Sabor Latino at Havana Greenbelt
Reggae Mistress at Havana Malate
VIP Barkada Nights at Government
Jazz Night at Segafredo Valero, Makati
Guarana at Conservatory at Peninsula Manila, Makati
Ana Fegi at Dish

Feb. 11, Friday

Ladies of the '80s at Araneta Coliseum
Queens on Fire: Pops & Regine V. at Ultra
Jazz in Love with Isha at Podium Mall
Pre-Valentines Singles party at Bed
MYMP & Pido at Eastwood City
Jon Santos at Music Museum
Decadance with Boyet Almazan at Soleil
HouSessions with Manolet Dario at Teak
House/RnB with Jon Herrera & Martin Pulgar at Temple, Makati
House DJ Cao Ocampo at Absinth
DJ Bam del Valle at Government
Antz Santiago & Marco Santos at Azzurro, Makati
The Jerks at '70s Bistro
Smokey Mountain D' Reunion at Dish

Feb. 12, Saturday

Lovapalooza II at Baywalk, Roxas Blvd.
Ladies of the '80s at Araneta Coliseum
America: Live in Manila at NBC Tent
Queens on Fire: Pops & Regine V. at Ultra
The Golden Legends at Aliw Theater
Lounge with Elian Habayeb at Paseo Uno
Fools for Love at Government
Nyoy Volante & Jimmy Bondoc at Eastwood City
Aretha & the Soul'd Out Band at Merk's
Shocks in D City with Jon Santos at Music Museum
Swinging Saturdays with Boyet Almazan at Teak
Hype Saturdays with Rico Robles at Rack's El Pueblo
House: Massive Saturdays at Bed, Manila
Flava'D with Rocky Rock & Shorty at Absinth
RnB: Flava'D with DJs Rocky Rock & Shorty at Absinth, Makati
Dancehall Saturdays at V Bar, Makati
Back to House at Temple, Makati
Film showing of "Haz conmigo lo que quieras" at Instituto Cervantes
Spy at '70s Bistro
Classical Music with Lyn Sherman, Michael Williams and Pinky Amador at Dish

COMPASS: Special Events

ART

Feb. 1-12: Pathology for Boredom, an exhibition of new paintings by Luisito Cordero at the Green Papaya Art Projects, 124-A Maginhawa Street, Teachers Village East, QC. Call 927-3187.

Feb. 1-25: Philippine Islands, Images of a People: 1860-1920, vintage photos from the John Silva Collection, at the Silver Lens Gallery, Pacific Plaza, Fort Bonifacio. Call 816-0044.

Feb. 3-27: Entries to the 19th Telephone Directory Cover Visual Art National Competition will be on exhibit at the National Museum. This year's theme is "OFWs-Mga Bagong Bayani,"

CINEMA

Feb. 1-28: In Love and Art. The UP Film Institute celebrates the month of hearts with an array of notable screen romances: "Iris" (Feb.7), "The Notebook" (Feb.8). Call 926-3640.

Feb. 5 & 12: Instituto Cervantes de Manila will screen Spanish Love Stories: "El cielo abierto" on Feb. 5 and "Haz conmigo lo que quieras" on Feb. 12 at their Salon de Actos. Admission is free. Call 526-1482 or visit www.manila.cervantes.es.

Feb. 5-26.: Alliance Francaise de Manille will hold Saturday screenings of François Truffaut films: "La sirène du Mississippi" (Feb.5), "L'argent de poche" (Feb.12). Admission is free. Call 895-7585.

DANCE

Feb. 4-6: Ballet Philippines presents BP Neo-Filipino at 15, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. at the CCP Little Theater, Roxas Blvd., Pasay City. Tickets at P600, P500, & P400. Call 832-3661.

MUSIC

Feb. 10: An Evening with The Voice: Russell Watson with the San Miguel Philharmonic Orchestra and The San Miguel Master Chorale. 8:00 p.m. at the PICC Plenary Hall, Roxas Blvd., Pasay City. Tickets at P8,817, P5,511, P2,756, P1,654, & P882 through Ticketworld. Call 891-9999.

Feb. 12: Close Up's Lovapalooza II, 6:30 p.m. at the Baywalk, Roxas Blvd., Manila. Featuring Paolo Santos, Jay-R, Kyla, Bamboo, Parokya ni Edgar, Rivermaya, and others. For details, text CLOSEUP LOVAPALOOZA to 2256.

Feb. 11 & 12: Ladies of the '80s, featuring Sheena Easton, Taylor Dayne, and Tiffany, 8:00 p.m. at the Araneta Coliseum, Cubao, QC. Tickets at P3500, P2500, P1200, P600, & P200. Call 911-5555.

Feb. 11, 18, & 25: Jazz in Love, featuring Enrique Ramos and Isha (Feb.11), 7 p.m. at The Podium, ADB Ave., Ortigas. Call 724-4832.

Feb. 12 & 14: America: Live in Manila! at the NBC Tent, Fort Bonifacio. Call 891-9999.

Feb. 12: The Golden Legends, featuring Chris Montez, Dennis Yost, and Gordon Waller, with special guests Area One and RJ Jacinto, at the Aliw Theater, Roxas Blvd., Pasay City. Call 891-9999.

THEATER

Feb. 5: Tanghalang Pilipino presents Richard Brinsley Sheridan's The School for Scandal, a delightful comedy of wit and intrigue, at the Tanghalang Huseng Batute, CCP Complex, Roxas Blvd., Pasay City. Call 832-3661 or 832-1125.

Feb. 5: Tanghalang Ateneo's Three-Penny Opera at the Fine Arts Exhibit Hall of Ateneo de Manila University, Loyola Heights, QC. Call 426-6001.

Feb. 5-6: Tanghalang Pilipino presents Yun Na Nga (kung yun na nga!), a Filipino adaptation of Luigi Pirandellio's "Cosi E! Se Vi Pare!", 8 p.m. at the CCP Tanghalang Huseng Batute, Roxas Blvd., Pasay City. Call 832-3661 & 832-1125.

Feb. 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26 & 27: Repertory Philippines presents Busybody, starring Joy Virata. At REP's Globe Theatre at Onstage, 2/L, Greenbelt 1, Ayala Center, Makati. For tickets, call 887-0710.

Feb. 12, 13, 19, 20, 26, & 27: Ang Buhay ng TAO, a morality play adapted from Isagani Cruz's "TAO," at San Sebastian College Auditorium, Recto, Manila. Call 324-4784.

FOOD

Feb. 1-April 3: Say Cheese! A Cheese Bar at The Lobby of the Peninsula Manila from 8:30 p.m. to 12 midnight. P495 for adults and P275 for children. Call 887-2888, extensions 2276 or 2205.

Feb. 11-14: Caught in Love. Celebrate Valentine's Day in Bizu, Greenbelt 2, Ayala Center, Makati. For an order of 2 set entrees and desserts, have your photo taken beneath the "La Tour Eiffel" for free and show us how much you are in love. The most romantic photo every evening wins an accommodation package for 2 to Crystal Paradise in Palawan. Call 757-2498.

Feb. 28-March 5: Simply Scandinavian, a Scandinavian Cuisine Week at the Captain's Bar of the Mandarin Oriental Manila. A refreshing blend of traditional and contemporary gustatory fare with the sophisticated sound of Helsinki Jazz Quartet. Call 750-8888.

Schedules may change without prior notice. For more information, text 24/7 through your mobile phone and send to 2949 for Globe and 209 for Smart. To win prizes such as an Ipod Shuffle, log on to www.mag24-7.com or get your free copy of 24/7 Nocturnal Navigator at bars and restos around the city. Send your schedules every Wednesday to events@mag24-7.com and mag24_7@yahoo.com or fax 892 0689.

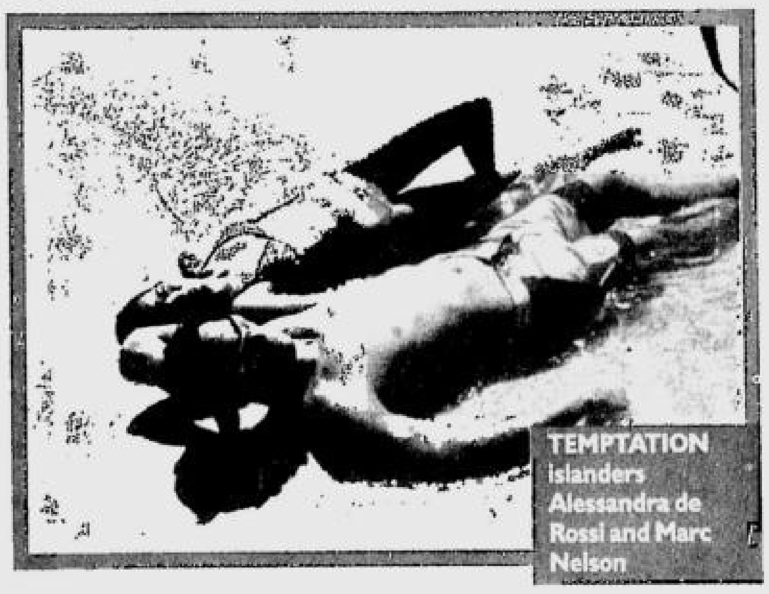
Super

E-mail: super@inquirer.com.ph
Text us your feedback: inquirer sup name/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

pop culture . entertainment . recreation

The rules of COOL

6-packed and fully stacked celebs, Zoolanders and media mavens muscled it out in Nivea's Aqua Cool Adventure Challenge, Palawan



TEMPTATION islanders Alessandra de Rossi and Marc Nelson

Text and photos by Tals Diaz

IF ADAM and Eve were created in an island paradise, then chances are there would have been no disastrous fruit-biting in the first place. For who the heck would even think of snacking on forbidden fruit with so many other temptations frolicking about?

Along with nature's lush, tropical enticements in Club Noah Isabelle, Palawan, were some beautiful, exotic specimens tumbling out of Noah's lesser-known arks. The temptation islanders comprised of 6-packed and fully stacked celebrities, Zoolanders and media mavens, all spicy-beefed up for the Nivea Aqua Cool Adventure Challenge.

High on adrenaline (and cholesterol from the *talangka* dinner buffets), four teams muscled it out for three days in Survivor-like competitions. There was the "funny" volleyball challenge, which proved to be truly a challenge with a little twist to the rules—the competitors all had to kneel while playing ball. As such, it was impossible for anyone to be a standout, though the Ernie Lopez-led White Team, in top form, proved to the rest that they're used to getting down on their knees.

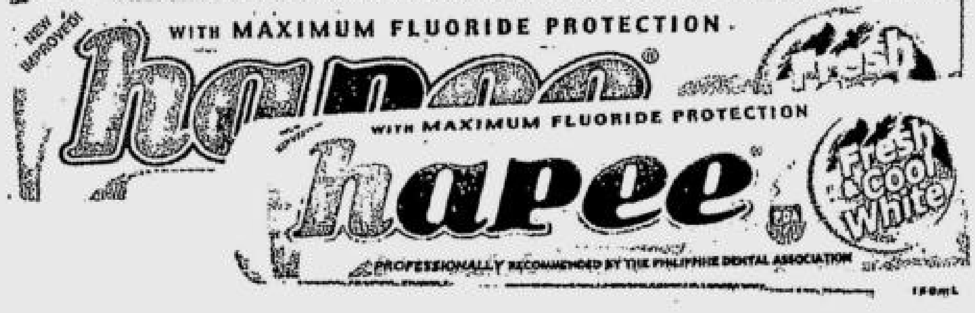
From sand to the sea, the Yellow and Blue teams then made a big splash (literally) with the windsurfing and water skiing events. I'm glad my own Team Orange-licious, led by coach Bubuy Garovillo, kicked butt by placing

THE RULES/ H2

HIGH ener-G

SPIKE that bald!

Put on a world class smile.

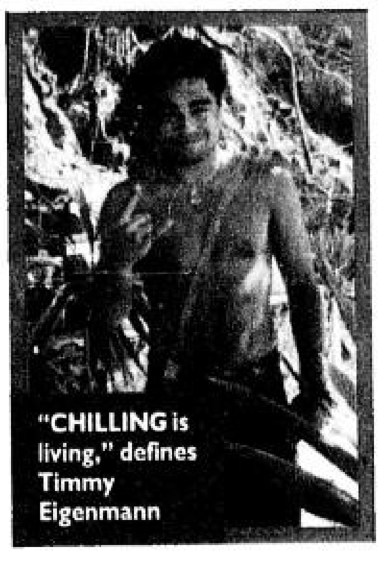

WITH MAXIMUM FLUORIDE PROTECTION
hapee
NEW IMPROVED
Fresh
hapee
Fresh Cool White
PROFESSIONALLY RECOMMENDED BY THE PHILIPPINE DENTAL ASSOCIATION

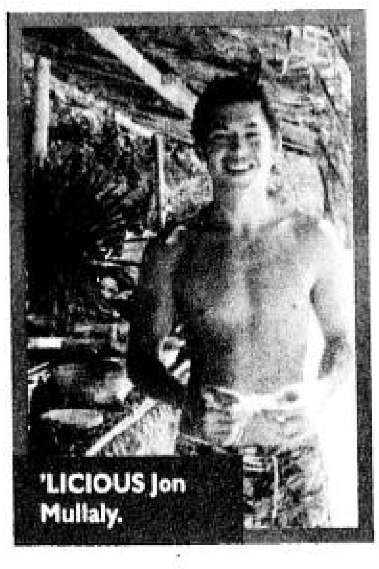
RECOGNIZED PDA PHILIPPINE DENTAL ASSOCIATION

Ang Pinoy laging hapee

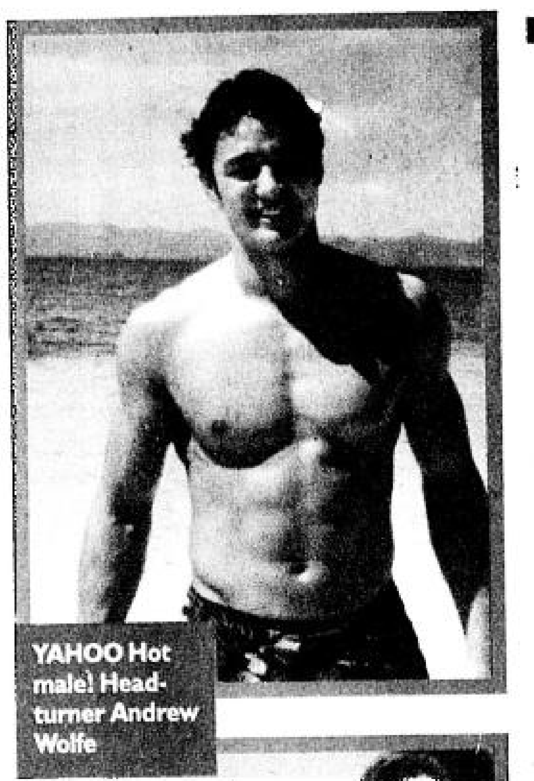
The only PDA-approved Filipino toothpaste brand. Get maximum fluoride protection in a cool flavor for that world class smile.

TREASURE chests

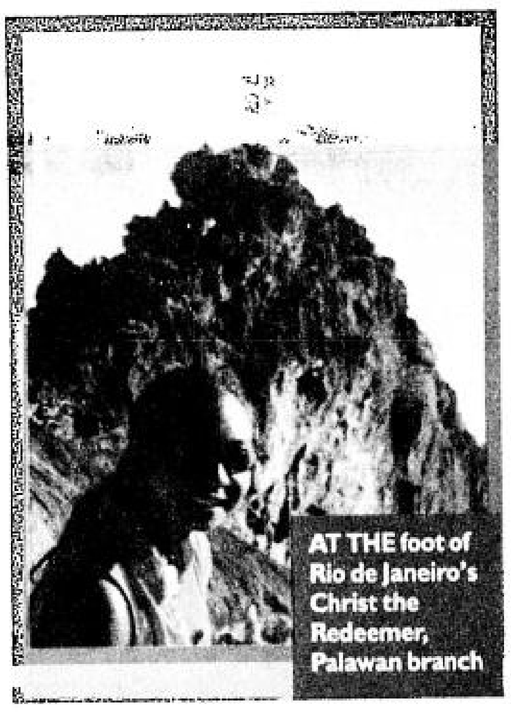

"CHILLING is living," defines Timmy Eigenmann


'LICIOUS Jon Mullaly.

TEAM CAPTAIN'S LOG. Joey Marquez, Raymond Gutierrez and coach Bubuy Garovillo


YAHOO Hot male! Head-turner Andrew Wolfe

WATER babe Carla Estrada


AT THE foot of Rio de Janeiro's Christ the Redeemer, Palawan branch

The rules of COOL

From page H1

first in the Ultimate Frisbee challenge, in spite of our go-getting mantra of, "*Basta*, let's not be last place, ok?"

Teams were assaulted with the relentless battlecry, "Who let the White out?" as trash-talking Jo Mari Yllana and G "Tonsils" Tongi were the default bullhorns, especially at the height of the heated kayaking relay. And then came the ultimate, adrenaline rush that capped off the high-impact, madventure-filled weekend: the rip-roaring fishing competition.

Still reeling from the uncontainable energy that pumped up the event, one-half of the birthday twins, Raymond Gutierrez, could not help but exclaim, "It's official, fishing is boring." (Might I just add—this boy is such a sweetheart!)

Some post-game analysis notes: Richard Gomez, chilling with his iPod, was cooler-than-thou, and Marc Nelson splayed on the shoreline was hotter-than-thou. Joey Marquez's antics can make you bust a spleen, while the them Eigenmann brothers truly dominated the hormonal female scene.

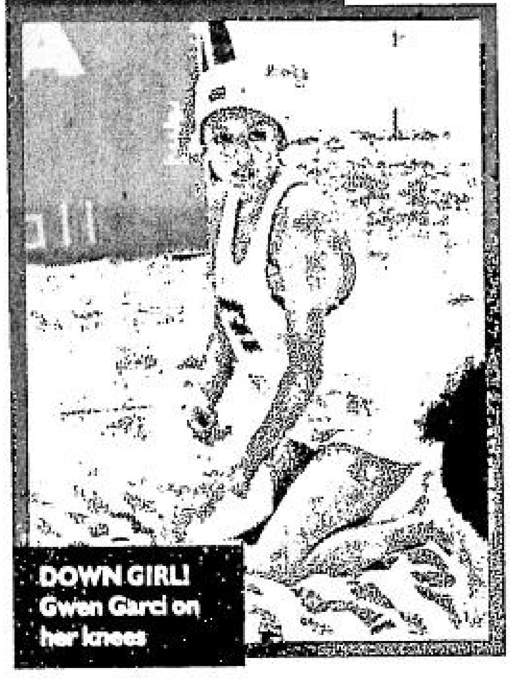
Surrounded by aquamarine seas teeming with colorful marine life, awesome limestone formations, and adorable bunny wabbits hopping about, the motley crew faced its biggest challenge yet: Alessandra de Rossi's *bunganga*. That and an all-day massage hut that would have put the Sirens of The Odyssey to shame, with spa-ctacular, skintastic oils and lotions meant for a complete rubdown. Resistance is futile!

At the final night, Club Noah and Nivea, probably taking notes from the Hedonist's Handbook, spared no expense in indulging the Havaiana-clad guests with a luscious dinner by the beach, with sultry bossa nova music chilling the night air. Everyone found their spirits even higher with an open bar of Alizé, Skyy vodka and Amarula. Samba drumbeats sparked off a fiery set by the Northern Palawan dancers, while Aiza Seguerra serenaded all with her sweet seraphic voice.

The White Team, proving that snacking on energy bars does boost performance level, was awarded the top prize of the Aqua Cool Challenge in the form of MP3 players and a degree of prestige.

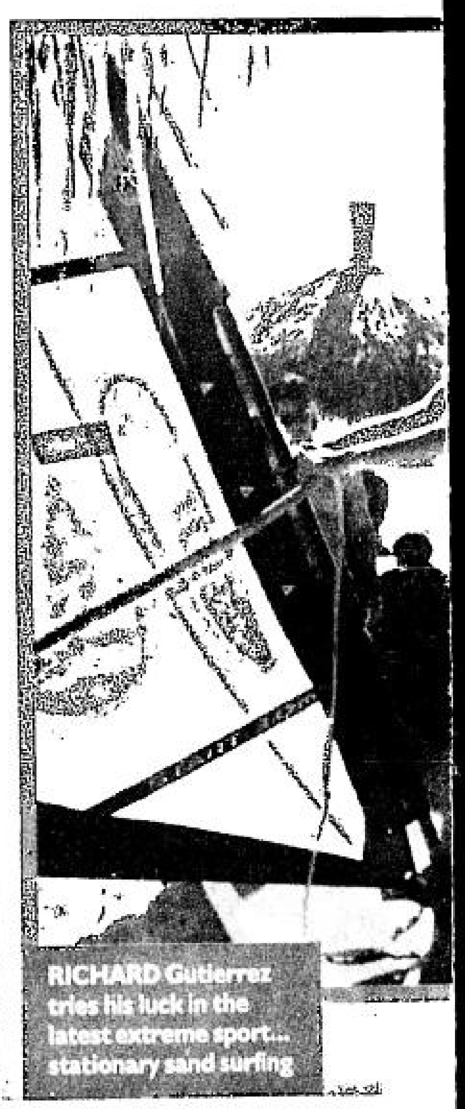
Still, everyone's a winner in paradise. Just soaking in the island vibe is enough to get you chillin' like Bob Dylan. The real temptation is to never leave.

COOLTURATI. Richard Gomez in his element


DOWN GIRL! Gwen Garci on her knees

ISLE STYLE. Marie Lozano of ABS-CBN

SHORE THINGS. Mina Sunico, sexy Tamara, and the Eigenmann siblings

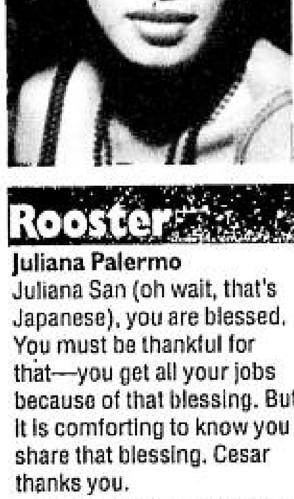

RICHARD Gutierrez tries his luck in the latest extreme sport... stationary sand surfing

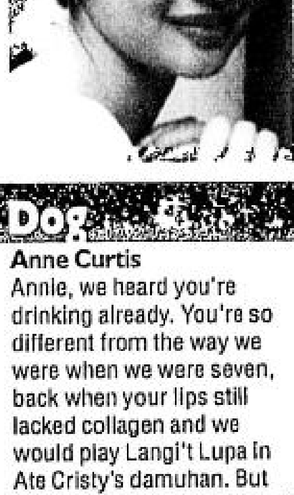
Chiang Kai Shek

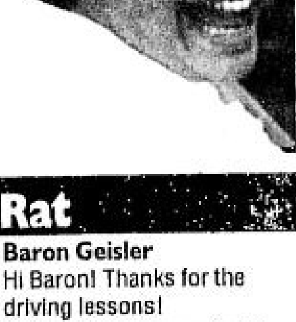
Chiang Kai She

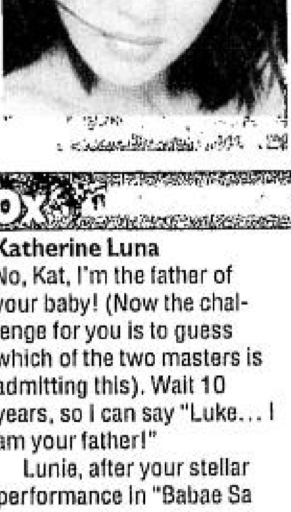
Or when feng shui masters enter James and Pepe's bodies

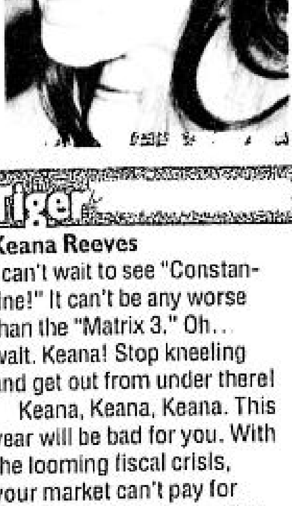
By Pepe Diokno and James Gabrillo











Rooster

Juliana Palermo

Juliana San (oh wait, that's Japanese), you are blessed. You must be thankful for that—you get all your jobs because of that blessing. But it is comforting to know you share that blessing. Cesar thanks you.

However, we must inform you of your fate (assuming your manager hasn't done that already). You will make one more great movie. Its title will be "Panaghoy sa Suba 2." Thank you Cesar.

We chose you, Juli, to represent the rooster population because when we see you, we see feathers. Besides, a rooster is also a cock.

Dog

Anne Curtis

Annie, we heard you're drinking already. You're so different from the way we were when we were seven, back when your lips still lacked collagen and we would play Langi't Lupa in Ate Cristy's damuhan. But now that you think you're all grown up, advice: drink light. (Oops.)

Curtie, there is a career move in the horizon. We are pleased to inform you Kuya Germs thinks you're talented enough—and he wants you to be a part of Master Showman. Our advice, screw Kuya Germs, do more booze ads. Your handler should get them played on AM as well. Spread cheer to typhoon-wrecked provinces.

Boar

Mo' Twister

We saw you on TV yesterday! You were fabulous! Then we got out of our time machine.

Mo', you will make a comeback this year… as an annoying waiter in Bora. Watch out, The Hunks! We heard Mo' has a membership in Gold's Gym.

But seriously Mo', we miss you. You will make a movie—a documentary by Ramona Diaz about Delamar… oops, Miles *pala*.

Rat

Baron Geisler

Hi Baron! Thanks for the driving lessons!

You, Baron, are going to be big this year. Billboards, TV ads, radio jingles—all about safe driving.

Here's what the stars have in store for you this year: A name change. Try something people can spell. Wait… it's coming in… Baron Vandolph.

Ox

Katherine Luna

No, Kat, I'm the father of your baby! (Now the challenge for you is to guess which of the two masters is admitting this). Wait 10 years, so I can say "Luke… I am your father!"

Lunie, after your stellar performance in "Babae Sa Breakwater," you shall make a film that will also be critically acclaimed—"Sigaw 2: Ella Guevarra, Malaki Na." So stop crying and start practicing Lamaze.

Tiger

Keana Reeves

I can't wait to see "Constantine!" It can't be any worse than the "Matrix 3." Oh… wait. Keana! Stop kneeling and get out from under there!

Keana, Keana, Keana. This year will be bad for you. With the looming fiscal crisis, your market can't pay for your services anymore. Our suggestion, instead of congressmen, try congresswomen. (But not the party-list ones—they lack funds.)

Hare

Toni Gonzaga

You have a family!

Considering that career-changing move to start the year, 2005 is gonna be good… until Channel 2 puts you in one of their 30 new shows. Toni, no. We sense a better offer for you—a part in the Vagina Monologues. You will be the singing vagina. Get used to saying the word vagina. Vagina, vagina vagina.

But seriously, you're gonna be engaged this year… to… Kuya Dick. Get used to saying the name Dick. Dick, Dick, Dick.

Dragon

Kuya Germs

Kuya, National Book
running out of glitte
paper, cartolina and
paper. Stop using th
your sets.

We sadly inform
your show will be ca
this year. People will
er that your show is
When we found out
shows are taped. Ge
our whole childhoo
devastated. We had
dergo therapy … wit
Taus (who?)

Walang tulugan,
Practice what you p

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TEAM Orange you glad we're not last place?

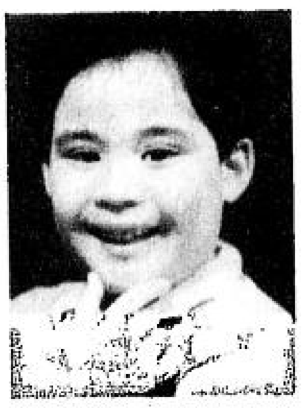
ANNE Curtis muses, "Life's a beach because...*(minutes pass, a leaf falls)*...it's about...*(bats fly out of cave)*...having fun and...*(author sips beer)*...just chilling!"

TROPICAL gals Jackie Castillejo and Nivea's Rica King

LET THERE be lait! Maurice Arcache and Pepper Teehankee chillin' like villains

WILD on windsurfing

Chiang Kai Shek



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each!!

Serpent

Mystica

You will win the lottery... but just like in Bruce Almighty, everyone in the neighborhood wins the grand prize with you. You will end up with two pesos... and a gimmick with the MMDA (again). The bright side is, two pesos is enough to buy your makeup.

(And yes, by making a Mystica crack, we are now certified comedians.)

Horse

LA Lopez

Just like Mo', you're back this year—this time, as L Lo. The public is interested to see you after puberty—or your trip from Nevernever Land.

LA, the guys from Iodized Salt called—they want their money back.

LA, Michael Jackson called—he wants you back.

Ram

The Jaboom Twins

Hi Jaja! Hi Boomboom! Hi Chitychitybangbang!

Unfortunately, the stars say you will separate this year (after an operation in New York). Jaja, you will be the new host of an ABC 5 show—called "Deretsahan." However, you will die on the show after a chair hits you at the back of your... left knee. So make sure there are no chairs when you take over the show.

Boomboom, you will be the new host of another ABC 5 show—called "Pops!" However, you will also die on the show when a screaming "It girl." comes tackling you during the opening number. So make sure there are no pops.

Monkey

D'Bodies

Oh... oh... not there, I'm ticklish there!

Bodies, we forecast that this will be the chorus of your next hit single:

Doorknob, doorknob
May tao sa pinto
Sino, sino yan?
Ay, wag diyan!
Salumpwet, salumpwet
Answer the phone
Who is it, who is it?
Oh, it's Manoling Morato!

Comments at chowtime@greenarcher.net

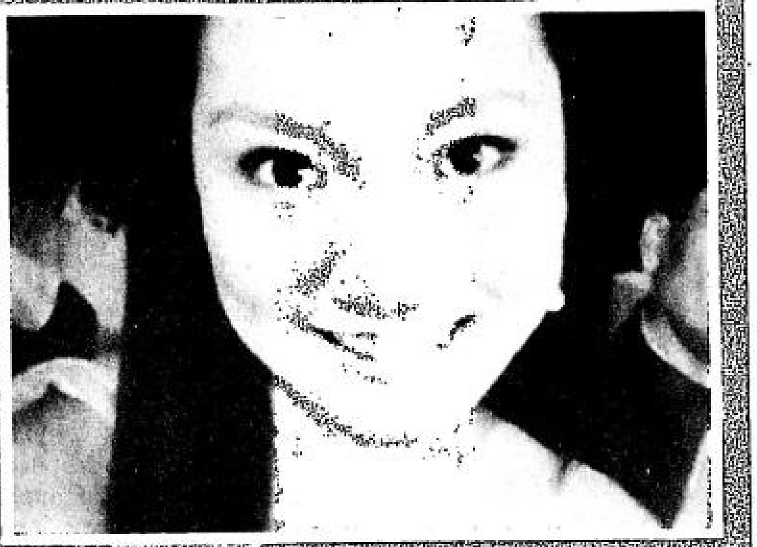
Superfriends!

Text an phots by David Milan
Want to be on Superfriends? E-mail me your photos at david_milan@lycos.com

Pat Sioson

Age: 22 years old
I trip on: Spinning music on my mixer
Celebrity who makes me high? Jennifer Connelly with her angelic face
My trip-hop night is composed of: Great music, lots of beautiful girls and a cozy ambience
Drop me a message at: patmseticon.con

Larah Monterola



Age: 19
I trip on: Chocolates—it's my weakness!
Celebrity who makes me high? Ryan Reynolds, because of his humor and hot body.
My trip-hop night is composed of: All-night dancing with friends
Drop me a message at: larah8@yahoo.com

Anton Gpau

Age: 18
I trip on: Baking, because it's so damn good.
Celebrity who makes me high? Paris Hilton—solid!
Drop me a message at: antongpau@yahoo.com

Kel Hernandez

Age: 21
I trip on: Go-karting and jogging
Celebrity who makes me high? Josie Maran, because she's simply stunning
My trip-hop night is composed of: My friends at Chakiks or 90proof
Drop me a message at: kelhernandez@yahoo.com

Kate Bernal

Age: 19
I trip on: Accessories, because I love to mix them with my clothes
Celebrity who makes me high? Brad Pitt, because he's not only handsome, he's also a good actor
My trip-hop night is composed of: Partying with my friends
Drop me a message at: kate_bernal01@yahoo.com

Gino Relampagos

Age: 18
I trip on: The beach because I love the sand and waves.
Celebrity who makes me high? Sophia Bush and Anna Kournikova because their so hot right now.
My trip-hop night is composed of: Beer, food, friends and more food.
Drop me a message at: [illegible]pagos@yahoo.com

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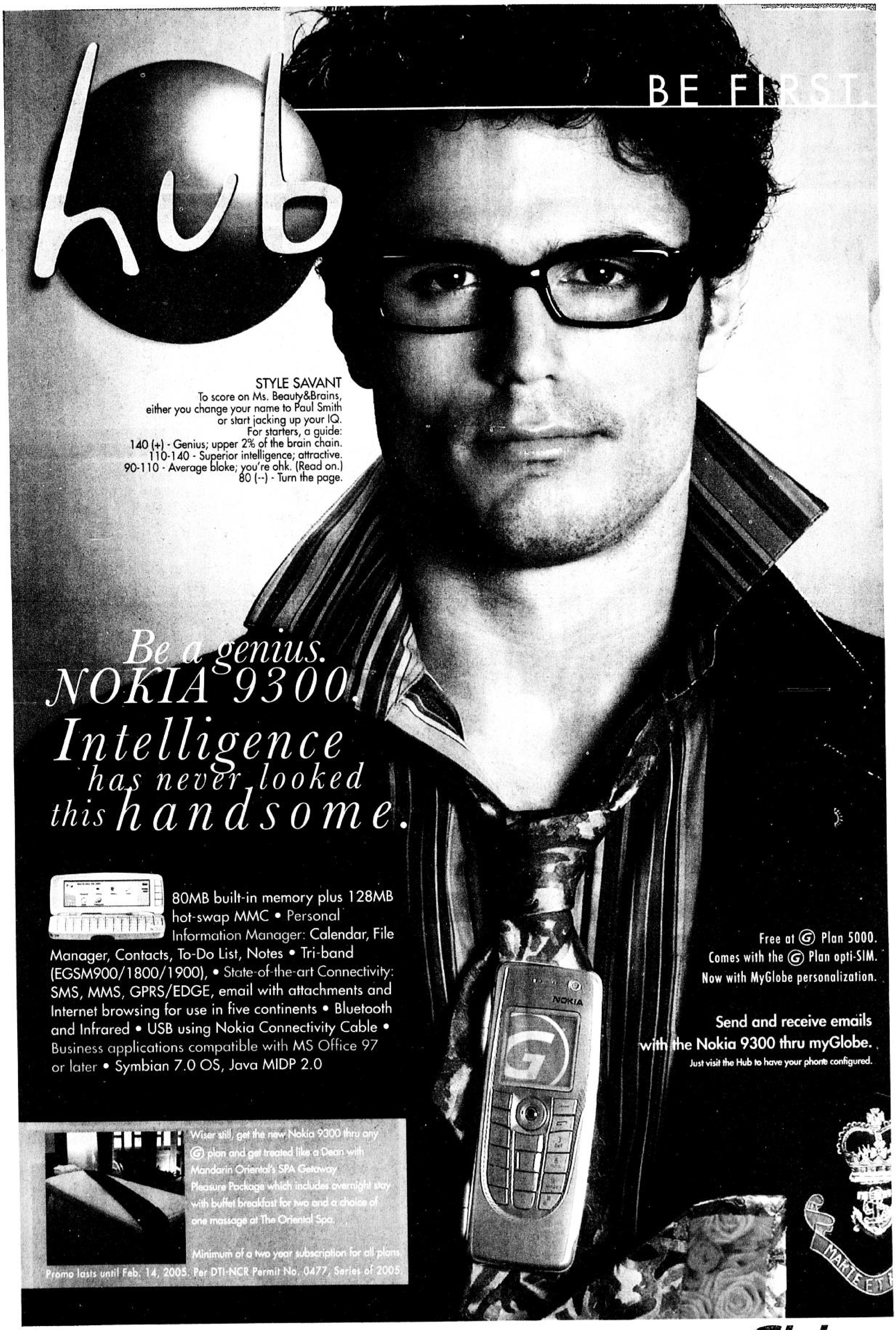
Chiang Kai Shek

Story on page H2



hub

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90-110 - Average bloke; you're ohk. (Read on.)
80 (--) - Turn the page.

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